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**AN INQUIRY INTO THE  
INTIMATE LIVES OF WOMEN**



**An Inquiry  
into the  
Intimate Lives  
of Women**

by

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**CADILLAC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC.**

**NEW YORK**

**1950**

This book is a translation from the French  
by Paula Gibault of "*L'Amour Sous le Masque.*"

AN INQUIRY INTO  
THE INTIMATE LIVES OF WOMEN

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



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## Introduction

This work started in 1935 while I was doing research at the Faculty of Social Sciences (University of Brussels). I tried to find in the Faculty's library some data on different questions regarding population problems and also the real sources of conjugal conflicts leading to divorce. What I found in the French, English and German languages was so scant that the idea occurred to me to make an investigation for myself and gather as much information as I could by questioning as many women as I could reach.

A non-profit association whose aim is to foster "better conditions for human happiness" (Hélios, asbl, founded in 1924) provided the necessary funds and clerical help and furthermore gave me the opportunity of lecturing to its members and associates so as to gather the names of the first few dozen future prospectees.

The research work for this book was hindered and discouraged in all possible ways. Press campaigns in political papers, denunciations on the grounds of public indecency were formulated to the Police. Slandorous rumors were put out on the author's professional honor, etc. . . .

But the work went on steadily. Three police raids were made on my private dwellings in order to seize the documents of the research, and thus make all publication impossible. This, by the way, shows how high interest was in the outcome of this scientific work, the first one of its kind on this continent.

Luckily, I was warned against the first raid in due time and all data was saved! But the lesson was not forgotten and since then, I worked on the manuscript only by night. The old French Constitution of "22 Frimaire an VIII, art. 76" which still makes law in this country, says: "During the night, nobody has the right to enter the house of anybody living on this territory, except in case of fire, flood or in case of a call from the inside of the house." The material was brought to me by faithful friends, after dusk, and everything went away to a safe hiding place before day-break. . . .

It went on like that for months. This is how the material of this study was compiled and the manuscript written. As soon as all the data had been collected and the material was of no further immediate use, a sworn bailiff was called in to watch the counting of the files and their destruction by fire, drawing up an affidavit of the operation. Many questionnaires which were supposed to be anonymous, in fact, bore the full names and addresses of women who had volunteered to answer. This fact had been disclosed by the press and the idea of those police raids was not only to scare persons who intended to bring their

help in answering the questionnaire, but also to secure names of people in the hope of finding sufficient matter for some court-suits against wrong-doers (contraception, *abortus provocatus*, etc. . . .) which would have ruined the whole undertaking.

These attempts against the secrecy of this scientific survey failed, thanks to the zeal of my colleagues and friends, too many to be personally named here, whom I wholeheartedly thank for their unflinching support and help.

When I first read "The Sexual Behavior of the Human Male," by Professor Alfred C. Kinsey, I was not in the least astonished to discover that his initiative had also met with hostile reactions from some organized bodies, but I found no trace of any "legal" attempt against his property nor his professional honor. Well, that makes my experience unique!

When, after the liberation of Belgium by the American and British armies, I at last got in touch with my learned American colleague, and had the opportunity to send him, together with my admiration for his most important achievement in the realm of science, a copy, in French, of my book, I never wrote to him the exact conditions in which it was written. He will find the information disclosed here for the first time!

On March 7, 1949, Professor Kinsey wrote to me: "We are, of course, definitely interested in statistical fact-finding investigations and it looks as if your study has useful data for us. We are particularly in-

interested to make comparisons with what you find in your European population and what we find in ours. Is there any chance of your extending your study and making more complete breakdowns?"

He will now understand why I had to answer him in the negative. It is I who await now his forthcoming book on the sexual behavior of the human female with great interest, in order to make comparisons! I hope that my contribution of 1936 will have proved of some value in the planning of the scientific work which is now going on, in a way and on a scale which I never dared to dream of.

May I add a last word: although this book was written some years ago, it has not lost any of its interest in Europe. It still shows, broadly speaking, no difference with conditions prevailing now in this old country.

Technically, great progress is being made in industry and in science, but conditions of human sex life and particularly of woman's intimate life have altered so little that it is quite legitimate to consider the changes, up to date, as negligible.

"L'Amour sous le Masque" stands in 1950 as it stood in 1937. In other words, there is still much to be done if we are to achieve a greater Human Happiness!

MARC LANVAL

1st May 1950



**Part I**  
**THE INQUIRY**



## The Birth of an Idea

Too many presumptuous men claim for themselves fields which are in reality most foreign to them. Especially as regards woman and marriage, they judge situations of which they have absolutely no practical knowledge and they dogmatize without bothering with prior inquiry or experimentation.

When ideas come to our minds, those people who once expressed them disappear, for ideas live of themselves. I have no desire to launch a controversy here. I merely wish to explain the mental processes which formed within me almost unconsciously as a result of ideas expressed, regarding woman and marriage, by people who were in no position to judge, evaluate and formulate such ideas. It was almost as if my ego were the passive spectator of what was taking place in my subconscious.

I remembered, for example, an opinion which Voltaire had given about women—an entirely unfavorable opinion. One day at Madame du Châtelet's he was playing with a child to whom he had been giving lessons. "My young friend," he told him, "you must keep women to yourself. To be able to do so,

you must come to know them. You will then learn that all women are false and that they are all deceitful and of easy virtue."

"What, all women?" cried Madame du Châtelet angrily. "What manner of talk is that?"

"Madame," replied Voltaire with all seriousness, "you must never deceive children."

It would take too much time to review here all the disparaging pronouncements about women and family life which have been made by famous men of all shades of opinion. Their result has been to engrave upon my mind this unknown one:

"After all, what do men in general know about them? And what do I know about them myself?"

It is understood that the family is the nucleus of our society. All textbooks on sociology, all codes and all catechisms add: "The man is the head of the family." He represents the family; he is the legal guardian of his wife and children. Much more so, in fact, of his wife than of his children because the latter will be freed from his guardianship upon reaching their majority, while his wife remains his responsibility until her death.

We are over-saturated with ready-made ideas, prejudices, clichés and theories stated as axioms, such as: "Man is master of Nature." "Man is superior to woman." Man is this, that and the next thing. Even when we speak of women, we still say "mankind," for Man represents all of humanity. It is taken for granted once and for all that even though Woman

gives life and existence to humanity, it is Man who brings the spark and who is thus henceforth the all-responsible one. He directs everything, he commands everyone. He takes everything for himself and sees the world only in terms of himself, for himself and by himself.

No one will deny that the entire question of family is intimately linked with that of marriage. Indeed, it derives from marriage. Without marriage there is no family. This platitude must be restated for the very reason that it is not merely a religious ceremony or a civil formality which constitutes family and marriage. Marriage and family is much more than a gesture.

Plato<sup>1</sup> said that the love which attracts us to each other results from the fact that we were originally hermaphrodites. The ancients, who sought an explanation for everything and wished to find a rational basis for all human instincts, feelings and behavior, had invented the theory that our body must have been created with two heads, two pairs of arms, two pairs of legs—in short, two bodies linked together like Siamese twins, but which would have comprised the male and female sexes.

This being was to be the perfect, absolute and

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Banquet*. See also Anatole France, *Histoire Comique* on the subject of hermaphrodites. This myth is found in many religions under the name of "2 in 1—1 in 2." This being was called "Ich-Icha" by the Hebrews; "Ying-Yang" by the Chinese; "Usuris-Usurit" by the ancient Egyptians. Christians spoke of "Adam and Eve," the latter taken from a rib of Adam.

indissoluble couple. But it happened that these human hermaphrodites became so presumptuous and so arrogant that they went so far as to threaten the gods in this power and authority.

To reduce their strength, Jupiter divided all these hermaphrodites into two equal parts, one masculine, the other feminine, and since then the human body has been what we know it to be today. Then he mixed all halves, which had become wholes, in a gigantic mythological shaker and poured this improbable cocktail upon the earth where the new human beings had to get along as well as they could by themselves.<sup>2</sup>

Every man and every woman is thus motivated by a longing for his or her lost half which must be found to complete the perfect unit. This mysterious force which leads man to search among all women—and conversely leads woman to seek out among all men—the ideal partner lost so long ago, is what we call Love.

This love is so noble and so strong that when each half has found its other half, when the ideal being is thus restored in this lovingly united couple, nothing—not even death—can prevail against that absolute and sacred force.

Despite the centuries which have gone by, despite the acquisitions of modern science and despite our

<sup>2</sup> The outward meaning of this myth is the superhuman strength born of perfect love which “makes humans like unto gods.”

materialism, the poetry which has come down to us from this platonic theory of love is still a source of delight. Indeed, nothing is more sublime than the loving couple which, uniting two bodies, two souls and two minds, forms a really new personality. Only those who love and are loved, whether men or women, can claim to live and vibrate in harmony with the cosmos, which itself exists only in terms of love. For love creates life while hatred engenders death.

Thus it is only logical to say that marriage, family and society exist in terms of physical and mental love, as a function of the sexual couple which is its very basis.

For more than forty centuries woman has lost the place she occupied in prehistoric society. Man has despoiled her of her sacred character, of her priestly functions, of her role of temporal chief, and has moreover stolen from her the rudiments of knowledge which she possessed until then, upon which man built philosophy and modern science.<sup>1</sup>

Since those ancient days, with few exceptions, woman has never succeeded in winning back her lost position. And the road she has had to travel, bowed beneath the yoke of man, was the road of slavery.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century there

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Sexual Mutilations in Ancient and Modern Religions* by the same author.

came a reawakening of the feminine desire for freedom and equality when she commenced taking an interest in political and economic affairs, emerging as a personality in the world outside of the restricted domain of the four walls of her home. From her sprung our contemporary "emancipated woman."

Marriage exists for man only by reason of the advantages he derives from it: pleasure for his nights, gastronomic joys from his meals, washing of his socks. In turn courtesan, cook, servant and housekeeper, a wife represents an interesting economy for man. He economizes on his household, on his food, on his sexual pleasures. And children represent both the necessary outlet for his virility and the concrete hope of his survival after death.

Many fine minds claim that marriage was created in the interests of woman, for her advantage and protection. Yet one could retort that the modern, legal codes regarding woman and marriage were set forth by men, that their laws were made and adopted by men, and that the duties and penalties established by these laws are applied by men!

The ideas, rights and opinions of women are hardly ever or never respected, either in laws, regulations, customs—or in morality. No one has even bothered to find out what their opinions and rights might be. Men considered them of no importance and, although it was impossible to deny their existence, simply ignored them.

Whenever it becomes necessary to pass laws or



take some position on a question relating to women, men merely pontificate, decree, and impose upon women their own masculine views.

And even those rare men who do try to aid the cause of women, who are disgusted by injustices done to them, who wish with all their strength either equality or at least equivalent rights and duties for women, know very little about them. When they demand more justice or propose remedies and reforms, do they really express the inner feelings of womankind?

These are the thoughts which became implanted in my mind, and there grew, almost unconsciously, the desire to know, as far as possible, the truth about the feminine question—not a biased or deformed truth, but the real truth—in other words, the woman's truth.

Was not this logical? Is not truth depicted as a divinely beautiful woman emerging in all nudity from an obscure well? Since this very symbolism, which is the true universal language of sages and scientists, imposed the image of Woman indissolubly linked to Truth, I had every right to believe that I should go directly to her to find out where we have gotten in this modern world of ours, with ideas, remedies and reforms which should be applied to her condition, to family life and even to society.

I had to go right to Woman herself, for she alone could tell me in all frankness, with no reticence and without mental reservations, the innermost basis of

her thoughts on all problems which revolve about her.

This book was thus born of the lack of comprehension on man's part, of man's systematic blindness and selfish wickedness. I have explained the mental development which has led to its compilation in order to make clear the cares and the precautions which may often appear strange and bewildering to the reader, but which guided me in completing the task I had imposed upon myself.

## The Realization of an Idea

To carry through, in a practical way, the idea which I have just described would be the equivalent of undertaking a statistical survey rather than a narration.

No matter how much care one may take to be objective, one cannot give to a story the documentary value which I would like this book to have. Literary considerations, style, and, especially, the latent personal views of the writer are factors which would detract from the very essence of the reported facts.

A good "feature story" is essentially the fruit of the author's talent. Doesn't that prove that talent replaces objectivity? But my view on that subject is different. I have taken pains to avoid being the "author" of this book. I am merely its humble instrument, the impersonal spokesman of the inner feelings of five hundred and sixty eight women. They wrote this book! It is their selective work, for I have steadfastly endeavored to voice, as faithfully as I could, the sentiments and opinions which they have expressed.

My first task was to reach women of all types, belonging to the most widely diversified circles, religions and groups. This wide range was vital for a

final synthesis of woman's feelings. For this synthesis had to reflect not the opinion of the married or the unmarried woman, or the mother of children, or the religious, or the career woman or the homemaker, or the lady of leisure—but of woman in general, from the feminine essence itself.

It was necessary to be equally sure of the total sincerity of their answers, for it is obvious and undeniable that one of woman's subtle weapons is a deviation from the truth. Others besides me will claim that this is her capital fault; but those who know woman (and I daresay that they are rare) will know that if Truth is also Woman, it is because normally she never tells tales for pleasure and she does not, like man, distort truth to take pride out of it and to enjoy the vanity of making herself appear bigger in her own eyes and in the eyes of others. A personal experience of many years' standing has taught me that when one knows how to win the comprehensive confidence of a woman, when one is able to persuade her that all coquettish ideas of "sex appeal" are useless, when one is able to forget before a woman that one is a male and wishes to be considered only as a mental companion who listens and gives advice, she opens her heart with simplicity. The structure she has built up of prejudice and exaggerated sense of responsibility and so-called morals (rules of right and wrong), of which she almost makes a profession in society, falls to pieces like a house of cards. The time is past when it is necessary to keep on dinning

the same phrases that men have taught her on the necessity of rigid adherence to a definite "masculine" code, on the inhumane virtue of imagined illnesses, on the unwarranted need for bashfulness, on the necessity of ignorance and frustration. She sets forth calmly and without useless recrimination, without coquettish embellishment, the very depth of her conscience.

Therefore, it was necessary to recreate as much as possible that atmosphere of confidence and intimacy, and it struck me that it was necessary to break away from the classic notions of the statistician in order to organize an inquiry that would be absolutely anonymous.

I wanted my inquiry to penetrate into boudoirs and kitchens, into simple rooms and costly apartments, into large estates and small furnished lodgings. I intended to get in touch with the woman, to explain succinctly what this inquiry entailed, to ask her to meditate on the questions that were set forth and to answer them in all frankness.

I stipulated that she would not reveal her identity, that she would not sign the form—even begged her to desist from giving any name whatsoever in order to give to her answer the stamp of anonymous invisibility.

It was obligatory that the woman could be certain her confidences (among which some very tragic ones could be found and others fell under penal laws) would never be used against her.

In spite of the professional integrity imposed upon me, and the fact that nobody until then had ever disputed my work, I realized that some of my correspondents would ignore me entirely. It was, therefore, necessary to anticipate all these justifiable defense reactions. Did I not have to be equally forgiven for being only a man?

The principle of anonymity of the answers being assured, it was then necessary to think of establishing a questionnaire. This task consumed three months to accomplish—scarcely a question was written that didn't need modifications, additions, parts deleted—if it didn't eventually finish in small pieces in the eternally open mouth of my wastepaper basket.

Questioning right and left without, however, disclosing my intentions; rectifying, adding, making wider the circle of my preoccupations, the questionnaire little by little started to take shape. Approximately fifty forms were successively transformed or destroyed before I was satisfied with the form that I finally adopted. (Far be it from me to say that all was perfect, that there were no other questions to ask. But certain limitations were necessary.) The final form consisted of a series of questions divided into three groups:

- (a) The Woman and Society
- (b) The Woman and Her Family Life
- (c) The Intimate Life of Women

The form started with a preliminary questionnaire intended to give—in the absence of the name and

address (which had no importance whatsoever and could be of no interest to the inquiry)—the background of the correspondent. The first question was:

“What is your truthful age?” I thought it necessary to add this adjective to prevent, not false indications as some people might think—young girls who might add a little and women of a “certain age” who might subtract a bit—but to prevent the influence of round numbers that we all have a tendency to use preferably.

I could have asked the date of birth, which would have been more classic, but once again I listened to the “voice of experience” that has pointed out if the man knows his date of birth and quickly calculates his age, the woman knows much better the number of springs that have passed over her head than the year when she was born.

From there it was necessary to classify women according to their marital or single status. Consequently, I chose the following groups:

Single—independent, self-supporting

Single—dependent

Married—religious ceremony

Married—civil ceremony

It is obvious that the women who are married religiously have been previously married at the Town Hall and are, therefore, also civilly married since

the law requires the priority of the laic ceremony to the religious one.<sup>1</sup> But, as it was important to know if the conjugal union had been celebrated in observation of the religious canon or not, I wrote "religious" first and "civil" second, knowing that the woman who had been married only civilly would cross out the word "religious" in the form. I was not mistaken in my idea on this.

The questionnaire included women of all categories, even those who had not availed themselves of any civil formality, since I stipulated in the form, next to the independent single women, a place for those unmarried women who were "dependent" on another.

The profession and the work of the woman was also the object of a question (which will be seen in Table No. 3) and it shows the interest this allowed, since it gave proof of the selectivity of the origin of the answers and the excellence of the method adopted by the inquirer.

The social aspect of each case was taken into consideration in the final question, "Do you have children? . . . boys? . . . girls? . . . what are their ages?"

In order to keep this chapter from being uselessly

<sup>1</sup> Article 267 of the *Belgium Penal Code*: "Will be punished with a 50 to 500 francs fine (X by 7) any religious Minister who, outside of certain cases expressly excluded by the law, will proceed with the nuptial benediction before the civil marriage. —In case of further violation of same nature, he will be, besides this, condemned to confinement from eight days to three months."



long, I do not quote here the full text of the entire questionnaire; but each question will be given separately in its place as this book goes on, with the results and typical responses and necessary commentaries.

A decision had to be made with regard to the number of cases that would be done, for, obviously, nobody could think of consulting all the women of a country, nor those of a town alone, not even the women of a single district. The task would have been above human possibilities and would have gone beyond the financial means that were at my disposal.

Moreover, if I had proceeded that way, in spite of the high number of responses, the result would not have been typical because of the disproportion of married women as compared to the unmarried ones and, for example, another disproportion between women belonging to different groups and activities would have drawn an absolutely false picture of women in general.

The problem boiled down to: Who would be the women I could approach with this questionnaire? The first question which needed to be settled was that of the language to be employed. The logical choice was French, which is the language used in documents (and in which this book would be written originally). On the other hand, I could think only of women who at least knew how to read and write even if not on a highly cultured plane. The field within these boundaries was not limited; it was

large enough considering that it took in half the women in Belgium, the majority of the women in France, and a few other localities.

How many forms would need to be gotten up? That is, to how many women would I send this inquiry? After numerous hesitations, I arrived at the number of one thousand. I hoped I could count on using a third of the answers, and I believed that the synthesis of the opinions of three or four hundred women could represent with sufficient accuracy the average opinion of the woman of today facing the problems of living. I had to keep in mind the natural indolence of the usual Belgian woman, for whom the writing of a letter is generally regarded as torture. And I had to remember, too, that to the majority of women the power of concentration is quite a problem!

One will see later in this book that my expectations were surpassed and that the most flattering success rewarded my enterprise which had seemed to many to be quite daring. It brought me many derogatory comments and some slightly sarcastic commiseration on the part of some of my friends—but let us not anticipate!

The form was carefully gotten up and typewritten on a stencil, then printed on a duplicator machine. Here again I relied on certain indications which had been noticed by me during a few preliminary interviews. My correspondents told me that they felt greater confidence in a questionnaire done on the typewriter than in a printed form which, in spite of

all the resources of the art of typography, would remind them unpleasantly of the official forms they had to fill in for tax returns and other government matters. (The statisticians in charge of the official census of the population are well aware of this phobia of the printed questionnaire, and they complain that the result of their consultations are defective for this reason, which they cannot eliminate.)

The printed sheet could not effectively give that feeling of personal confidence that I wanted most of all to create. Evidently, the ideal thing would have been a personal letter accompanied by a form that would also be typed, in original, for each correspondent. This gigantic task was beyond my possibilities and, in consequence, the duplicator was adopted.

Each mailing included a letter with instructions for answering the form. I gave this the appearance of a personal letter by addressing it directly to the correspondent and including a facsimile of my signature. This letter was also done by means of a stencil and the duplicator, but the placing of my signature (by means of a rubber stamp) above my name, which was typewritten at the end of the letter, gave the circular a certain character of its own.

Here is, in its entirety, the text of the letter of instructions. It was kept as clear as possible, always bearing in mind the minimum intellectual capacity of my correspondents and not the average, which would at first have seemed the logical thing to do.

"Madame and dear partner:

You will find enclosed a questionnaire bearing on an inquiry on the Feminine Life. I take the liberty to draw your attention to the importance of this inquiry and the inevitable repercussion that it may have on the feminine claims. In consequence, I sincerely ask you to consent to follow scrupulously the following instructions:

- (1) Read the questionnaire entirely, then re-read it for the purpose of answering it. (Do not leave these papers around where they can be found by others.)
- (2) Answer carefully, succinctly, but completely on the same sheet. If there is not enough space, continue writing on the back of the sheet and repeat the number of the page. Write legibly, in pencil if you prefer.
- (3) If a question does not concern you, or if you do not understand it, or if you do not wish to answer it, cross it out and continue with the others.
- (4) Your reply must be personal and written without the least help; otherwise it would not be sincere and the results would be incorrect.
- (5) Be confident. You can be absolutely sincere. Do not sign. Do not make any mark. Do not

quote any name that could have you identified. Discretion and anonymity are thus completely guaranteed. I am bound by my profession to secrecy. All the forms are similar, as are the envelopes for return. These envelopes have not been stamped in advance in order to make you feel certain that no code mark whatsoever has been concealed under the stamp. Therefore, it is not possible for me to know my correspondent's identity and I will not be able to send you a follow-up letter in case of delay. Won't you please answer within the next eight days, to avoid any oversight?

- (6) Do not think that any detail is useless or superfluous. Everything is of utmost value. You are giving your cooperation to a scientific work from which will result accurate indications and possibly measures that will be beneficial to all women. Thus, you will be working also for your own selves.

In case, unlikely indeed, that you cannot cooperate in this inquiry, because your husband will not permit you to do so, just send back the complete letter, erasing your address and writing the words 'Returned—refused.' Even in that case you will be doing a good turn, and I thank you for it in advance. Indifference only would be regrettable and prejudicial to all those who do cooperate.

Your cooperation will be of great assistance to me, and with my sincere compliments, Madame, I hereby express my deepest gratitude for it.

Believe me,

Yours most truly,

MARC LANVAL”

I had some envelopes made in a commercial style, bearing simply my name and postal address. These envelopes were intended for the return of the questionnaires which, in every way, were and remained my property. With each mailing I also included a postcard which bore, in addition to the address, the following text:

“An inquiry on the Feminine Life—

Do you wish to cooperate? We are looking for the kind help of one thousand intelligent women, anxious to assist in the scientific study of problems of women, under the direction of Marc Lanval, Doctor in Social Sciences.

Are you among them?

The only thing you have to do is to fill in a questionnaire (fifteen minutes of your time) that will be sent free of charge and without obligation, with questions which pertain to all women, including you, your friends and your relations, whose names and complete postal addresses you will kindly write on the back of this card.

Anonymity is guaranteed. Return this card without fail. Thank you in advance.”

In paragraph 5 of the letter of instructions you will note mention is made that the return envelopes are not stamped in advance. This measure increased security, confidence and the anonymity of the correspondent. On the other hand, as some of my correspondents lived in other countries, it was impossible for me to stamp the return envelopes as the Belgian stamps evidently have no postal value in other countries. I do not think this slight pecuniary sacrifice asked of my correspondents prevented many of them from answering or returning the questionnaire.

In only one case was the postal value insufficient, the weight limit having been exceeded by a fraction. This small matter had certainly been overlooked by the correspondent, and I mention it here merely to demonstrate the real interest that this inquiry aroused among the women investigated.

Paragraph 6 of the letter was fully understood by my kind correspondents. One could have feared that this guarantee of anonymity would induce some of them to have a good laugh at my expense at first—but in the end at their own expense. The reader will see in the parts that have to do with absolute numbers that this was not the case—and will equally notice the percentage very low, but nevertheless very significant, of the envelopes returned with the notation “Returned—refused” because of non-authorization from the husband. None of these “returns” was from an unmarried woman, consequently no doubt

can be left in that matter. (See page 32 for further comment on this.)

We now arrive at the period when the mailings were sent out. On the duplicator we printed 1003 forms. One of these was locked up in my personal safe, a second copy was placed in the hands of my lawyer <sup>1</sup> who followed this inquiry closely. The 1000 forms were now ready to be sent to my correspondents and I kept the very last form on my desk to help me in the elaboration of my book.

I then set up a list of periodicals to which I intended to send this statement:

#### STATEMENT

We are informed that Marc Lanval, Doctor in Social Sciences, well-known author of several works on *Sociale Sexologie*, is now engaged in collecting the documents for a vast inquiry into Feminine Life, from the viewpoints of woman's social, ethical, intimate and family life.

He would be happy to have the kind cooperation of our devoted readers, aged eighteen and over. Those who would bring their help to this objective work for scientific research, for which no special knowledge is required, are requested to apply (without any obligation) for information and a

<sup>1</sup> This precaution was not in vain. I was effectively exposed to a series of annoyances intended to discourage me from this venture. Nothing was spared me; press campaigns, denunciations on the platform of the Belgian Senate, raids by prosecutors, investigations, seizure, etc.



questionnaire which will be sent to them free of charge and without any identification on the envelope, thus giving them a guarantee of the utmost anonymity.

Readers are requested to write directly to Dr. Marc Lanval, etc.

(Please release)

The newspapers were not approached as it was felt they would not be receptive to the general idea. It was also considered that in the professional periodicals I could gain the attention of the women practicing a particular profession, or belonging to a special social or philosophical group. This list of publications was established with all possible selectivity, taking into consideration the different tendencies, schools, churches, and as many trades as could be reached through such sources. In fact, they ran the gamut from spiritualists to delicatessen shopkeepers, and from the nudists to the readers of religious magazines. Many insertions were placed in the publications, but the press service to which I was a subscriber did not receive regularly all these specialized magazines which have a small general interest. Therefore, I could not take as a basis the clippings I received through my bureau, to get a complete picture of the periodicals which had inserted my statement and those which had ignored it. The latter are most certainly in the minority, and the table showing the professions is a proof of it.

I did not want to classify the answers received by way of an advertising "key" as it was my wish to ignore the source of the answers. Besides, the checking of the advertising efficiency of any particular magazine was not in the question—its only value was with regard to the goal I was pursuing. Also, these indications could have led me into error. It was sufficient for me to know that I was receiving the addresses of women (aged eighteen and over) who knew how to read and write the French language, even if it was only in the most primary way, and who were ready to give me a quarter of an hour of their time.

To these addresses I sent by personal mail an envelope bearing, in case of return, a simple postal address and enclosing:

- (a) a letter of instructions
- (b) an inquiry form (questionnaire)
- (c) a return envelope
- (d) a card requesting other addresses

The same cards were used that were distributed to the audience who accepted them at several lectures I gave in Belgium, under the auspices of various educational clubs and in some of the popular universities. At these lectures 600 cards were handed out, to which should be added 900 cards which were enclosed with the questionnaires, making a total of

1500 cards. (The last batch of 100 letters was mailed without this card.)

The first letters were entrusted to the post office in the month of June, 1936. A notable slackening was registered during the vacation period (July and August). Several monthly and quarterly periodicals did not publish the statement until September and October, some even in January, 1937. I had, nevertheless, hoped to be able to finish the mailing of all the questionnaires by the end of December, 1936. One knows—or better one guesses—the element of chance and the legal cause of this delay.

Because of the nature of this inquiry and the manner in which it was conducted, it was not possible for me to send my correspondents a follow-up letter in case of delay. I purposely refrained from any visits to them, from taking any step that would have enabled me to see that they had sent off their answers. It is obvious that if I could have done this, the waste would have been less. On the other hand, the success (in spite of the impossibility of following them up) demonstrates the eager interest that awakened their initiative, if one can decide by the total number of the direct and immediate answers.

Gradually, as the answers came in, they were classified in files of fifty responses, but they were not yet numbered. This would be done after the closing of the last extension of time—the date of which was announced in the press by a brief state-

ment. This date was settled as February 20th, 1937—thirty days after the delivery of the last questionnaire.

At this date the inquiry was registered as definitely closed. The files were mixed and each response received a case number. By so doing, it was not possible to know if the lowest numbers were in accordance with the answers received at first. This measure was taken to carry out to the limit the anonymity of the answer received.

I then harnessed myself to the task of reading the letters—a fastidious job if there ever was one. There was a time when I became discouraged at the immensity of the task. Can one imagine what can be said a few hundred times about sixty answers, each one allowing several different ways in which the response could be given? There were the unexpected, the secrets confided—the notes were generally of the highest interest. I did not make sufficient headway with my work. I missed the cooperation of a woman who knew the routine of secretaryship and who had, as well, the ability to be a shrewd psychologist; such a woman could assist me in solving the over-specialized cases and in deciphering the meanings of certain brief answers. In spite of all my good will, I could be mistaken, being a man, on the value of an indication given by one of my correspondents, an indication which would not have been in the outline of the expected answers.

It was indispensable for the objectivity and the

interest of this work itself that I should meet such an associate. A happy coincidence put Mrs. Ena Nilson in my path. Her brilliant articles and controversies which appeared in *Lumière & Liberté*,<sup>1</sup> to which she contributed regularly, are well remembered. I wish, at this time, to extend my thanks to her for the devoted cooperation she brought me, for the great help in my task, for her clear view and understanding kindness, her experience as a woman, writer, homemaker and mother of a family.

Here concludes the first part of this work, which is entirely my own. Everything that follows will be under the supervision of Ena Nilson and will represent (at least we think we have realized that goal) the result of the most exacting, scientifically possible objectivity.<sup>2</sup> I must also express my sincerest thanks to the hundreds of women who cooperated, each one in her small sphere, in bringing her story to the building of this book. I am happy and proud of the total confidence these women bestowed upon me in this circumstance. They will know that their aid and patience were not in vain—that I resisted all entreaties to unveil their anonymity.

Equally, I thank my colleagues of the press who

<sup>1</sup> "*Light and Liberty*" a *Hélios* monthly paper printed for social emancipation and no lucrative goal.

<sup>2</sup> We wish to declare that we did not draw out of the responses to our inquiry all that could be possibly taken. Our work is not complete. That we know better than anyone else. We leave to others to make use, in a more complete way, of the material we are publishing.

gave me their cooperation, and then sympathy, in releasing my statement and in bringing my project to the attention of their readers.

I express a regret—that of having had no response from forty percent of the women to whom the questionnaires were sent. But, despite their indifference or indolence, I hope that they, too, will benefit by the findings gleaned from those sixty percent who cooperated so fully.

# The Inquiry

## 1. Division of the Addresses

The thousand mailing pieces, after they were made up as described in the previous chapter, were sent out to their destinations in this manner:

Belgium	519	Spain	2
France	461	Luxembourg	2
Morocco-Algeria	6	Portugal	1
Great Britain	4	Italy	1
Switzerland	3	Netherlands	1

The Belgian and French addresses were distributed as follows:

Brussels	245	Paris	97
Antwerp	133	South	35
Liege	45	Lyon and	
Gand	17	suburbs	26
Huy	13	Various	
Namur	7	sections	303
Provinces	59		

The total number of envelopes received by us was six hundred ten. Eight of the replies were discarded as worthless for the purposes of our inquiry, although we have included some curious excerpts

from these, as in case numbers 254 and 261 which appear in the section "Confessions and Confidences." Thirty four of the six hundred ten were in our original envelope and had been marked "Returned—refused." We were, therefore, left with a total of five hundred sixty eight replies from which to draw conclusions in the survey.

A letter was returned to us by a student in social science (age eighteen and a half) who declared herself totally incompetent to give an answer.

Two envelopes containing answers to the inquiry reached us after February 20th, 1937—the date limit for the closing. These two letters were burned immediately, without any note taken of them.

The direct result of inquiry, therefore, was the figure of 56.8% of interesting answers—a figure sufficiently representative to permit us to draw objective conclusions which were not only of service to us, but a guide to all those who wish to know the truthful thought of today's French and Belgian woman behind the mask.

## **2. Distribution by Age and Marital Status**

We classified the single women in two categories from the information given by the women concerning themselves.

We also subdivided the married women in two categories—those married by civil law only and those who added to this a religious ceremony.

In the column of divorcees, we indicated with a



## THE INQUIRY

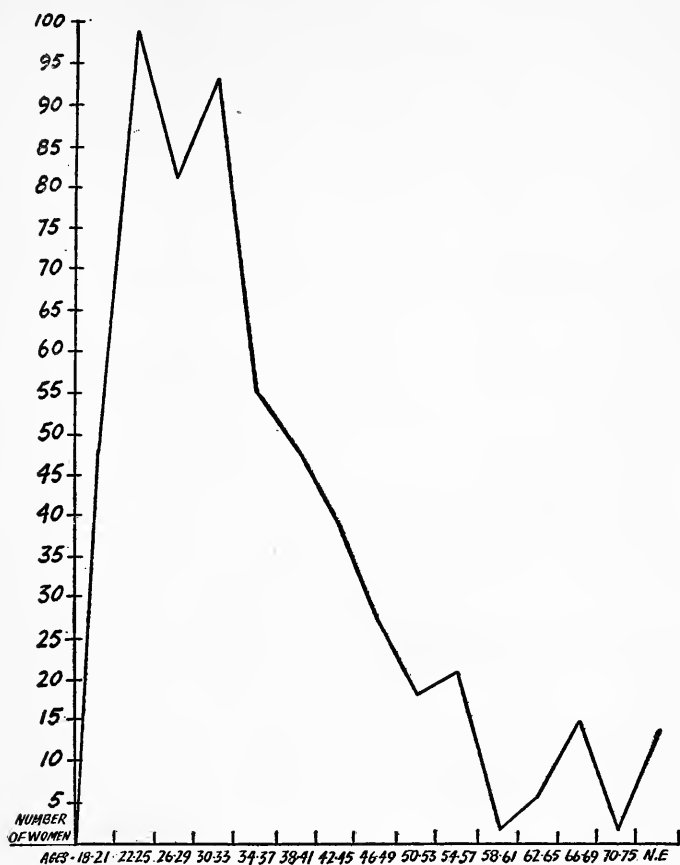


FIG. 1—Chart showing the distribution of the answers received according to the age of the correspondents. Those who did not supply this information are represented on the extreme right.

## DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO AGE AND STATUS

Age	Single		Married		No indi- cation of marital status	
	Inde- pendent	With tie	Religious	Civil	Divorced	Widowed
18-21	33	3	3	3	—	—
22-25	42	3	28	23	2r	—
26-29	19	11	27	24	4r	—
30-33	25	8	40	20	—	5
34-37	7	2	25	21	1r 1c	1
38-41	3	—	25	20	3r 1c	—
42-45	2	1	26	10	1r 2c	2
46-49	6	—	13	8	—	1
50-53	3	—	7	8	—	3
54-57	—	—	15	6	—	—
58-61	—	1	—	—	—	—
62-65	—	—	4	2	—	—
66-69	—	—	11	4	2r 1c	—
70 & over	2	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	142	29	224	149	18	12
	25%	5.1%	39.5%	26.2%	3.2%	2.1%
	Total for single		Total for married			
	171		373 + 24			
	30.1%		69.9%			
					10	
					554	
					14	
					568	

Responses without any indication of status: 14 + 10 = 24 (4.2%)  
(c) = divorced from a civil marriage (r) = divorced from civil and religious marriage

FIG. 2.

(c) those who had been married civilly only, and with an (r) those who had been married in religious ceremony as well. This served to indicate that the proportion of divorcees was the same in both categories—the religious marriage did not show any influence in this direction.

Ten women gave their ages but not their marital status. Fourteen gave no indication of either in the preliminary questionnaire, but as all the other questions were discussed seriously, we did not think we should eliminate these cases.

### 3. Classification by Occupation and Profession

Artists, musicians, singers, etc.	9
Real estate agents	3
Handicraft workers	6
Lawyers	4
Social workers	6
Dressmakers, milliners	15
Cashiers	5
Retail tradeswomen	11
Dentists	3
Designers	3
Physicians	4
Lace makers	2
Various trades (unclassified)	72
Students	12
Furriers	3
Public officials	10

# AN INQUIRY INTO THE INTIMATE LIVES OF WOMEN

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Teachers in primary grades	52
Keepers of inns and boarding houses	6
Nurses, midwives, etc.	15
Journalists, writers, etc.	9
Housewives, house managers, house maids	36
Peddlers	3
Mechanics, weighers at the mint	4
Studio workwomen, forewomen, etc.	17
Factory workwomen	6
Movie ushers	2
Chemists and druggists	2
Ironer	1
Teachers in secondary, academic and high schools	10
Stockholders, property owners	10
Waitresses and taxi drivers	4
Servants (parlor maids)	7
Stenographers	43
Accountants and bookkeepers	7
Saleswomen	8
Fortune teller	1
No occupation (so they stated)	131
No indication if working or not	26
Total	568

It is likely that the women who did not indicate any occupation or profession did not have any. That left four hundred eleven women, out of the total of

five hundred sixty eight—or 72.3%—who were engaged in some work or profession. The result of the inquiry was, therefore, essentially to establish the kinds of work of the modern woman—who is actively engaged in some trade or profession, who unquestionably seeks her rights and her proper place in society as an individual.

#### 4. Listing of Number and Sex of Children

Unmarried women:

without children	165
with 1 child (4 sons, 1 daughter)	5
with 2 children (2 sons)	1

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Total	171
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Married women:

without children			160
		<i>Sons</i>	<i>Daughters</i>
with 1 child	99	54	45
with 2 children	63	62	64
with 3 children	18	24	30
with 4 children	12	21	27
with 5 children	9	24	21
with 6 children	1	3	3
with 8 children	1	3	5
without indication as to the number			
of children	10		

203 married women have 386 children, equal to 1.9 child per mother.

For 363 married women, the proportion of children per woman is only 1.06. This figure seems extremely low, especially as we should take into consideration that most of the women had not yet ceased their menstrual periods. Of course, one must bear in mind that the majority of the answers were received from women who work, where the maternity rate must of necessity be less than where the women are solely housewives. We thought it would be interesting, as well as necessary, to determine the opinion of the woman of today, regarding maternity. Therefore, we asked the following question:

*“If you had been able to arrange your life according to your liking, without having any problems of finance or housing, and without considering what other people would say, how many children would you have or would you have liked to have? And would you want sons or daughters?”*

171 unmarried women answered as follows:

		Sons	Daughters
No children	45		
1 child	15	12	3
2 children	66	84	48
3 children	27	39	42
4 children	9	24	12
5 children	1	3	2
6 or more children	2	6	6
No indication given	6		

## THE INQUIRY

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171 unmarried women desired 168 sons and 113 daughters, which is a total of 281 children—or 1.64 child per woman. It should be noted that the desire for sons in this total is 59.7%. In all categories, except for the one where three children were desired, the majority expressed a desire for sons. This fact is significant and was confirmed by the examinations of the answers from the married women. We will have the opportunity of referring to this at different places in the book, especially in the question, “Would you like to be a man?”

The married women answered the previous question about how many children they desired (and what sex) in the following manner; although as some said they had no preference, they are listed in both the “sons” and “daughters” figures:

		<i>Sons</i>	<i>Daughters</i>
No children	59		
1 child	66	51	21
2 children	136	152	130
3 children	59	96	86
4 children	26	49	55
5 children	3	5	10
6 children	20	62	58
12 children	2	12	12
No indication given	2		

373 married women desired to be the mothers of 427 sons and 372 daughters, which makes a total of 799 children. Each married woman, therefore, wanted 2.14 children. The average for the total of married women was 1.9 children per woman. Note that the desire for sons is 53.4%. Comparing this with the division of desire for children as listed for the unmarried woman, it was effectively confirmed that the wish was greater for sons.

Upon examination of the two foregoing tables, it is shown that the lowering of the birth rate is not in conformity with the actual desire for maternity of modern women. When 373 married women who have only 386 children express a desire to have 799 children, one may not see in these figures an absolute value, but certainly a symbolic significance. When twenty women say they would each like to have six children, they are "translating" the idea that they want "many" children. When two women say that they would each desire to give birth to twelve children, it is the cry of the woman who wants to give birth to a numerous brood of children (a nestful). Of course, these are only two women out of three hundred seventy three.

On the other hand, 15.8% of the married women did not want any children, whereas 84.2% desired to be mothers as well as wives. Fifty nine married women did not want children, and we have seen in the previous table that 160 married women do not have children; thus we must perceive that of the



373 women, 101 would wish to be mothers but cannot, or do not actually want to, know the happiness of giving birth. We can, therefore, conclude that twenty seven women out of a hundred, married and without children, are childless although they would love to give birth. They are not to be blamed—if one could blame a human being for using her individual liberty. The reason for this maternal deficiency, for this obviously low birth rate must be looked for in the economic field. Consequently, it is erroneous to have a birth rate policy if one does not first bring a solution to the economic contingencies. If the woman is to bear children, she must have the best possible conditions in which to raise them.

The majority of women were categorical in their replies. They indicated clearly the number of children they wished to procreate. This constitutes the most striking argument in favor of the extension of methods for planning parenthood. These numbers which they indicated are an emphatic reply to those people who cry aloud for a continuously maximum rate of birth and to those who are responsible for the laws which limit the individual liberty by the legal prohibition, direct and indirect, of methods of birth control. Those who pretend that liberty in this matter would be equivalent to the end of the world commit a gross error. The supporters of planned parenthood (of which the author is one) have always maintained the thesis that modern woman does not repudiate maternity, but that she rebels against the

blind hazard, against fecundation without limit and the burden of imposed maternity that makes her the slave of her sexual mate. This report is a verification that these supporters have not been mistaken.

**Part II**  
**THE WOMAN AND SOCIETY**



# The Woman and Society

## 5. Civil Rights

In sending in their responses, many women supported their opinions with varied commentaries. We have chosen the most typical of answers to reproduce here, as well as in subsequent chapters, taking care to give expression to all tendencies. In order to classify the expressed opinions more clearly, we have numbered each one, listing also the age and the marital status of the woman who made the observation. In some cases we have indicated the number of children.

As far as possible, we are giving their answers verbatim, and in their entirety. However, considering the breath of opinion of the public authorities and their forbearance toward writers and pollsters, we have deemed it preferable to edit and tone down certain intimate statements.

Throughout the cases we shall use the same abbreviations:

SI: Single—Independent, self-supporting  
 SD: Single—Dependent  
 CM: Married (civil marriage)  
 RM: Married (religious and civil marriage)  
 NE: No explanation of status (whether single  
 or married)

We now proceed with the questions which were asked, and the results of the responses which were received.

*“Do you think that married women should have equal civil rights?”*

	Cases	
Yes	463	90.6 %
No	48	
No answer	57	

Among those not answering, we found twenty women who asked that marriage be abolished and for whom this question had no sense or meaning.

*“Should women exercise their vote: (a) in local elections, (b) for state representatives, (c) for senators?”*

	Local	Repre- sentatives	Senators	
Yes	432	430	429	75.9 %
No	133	136	136	
No answer	3	2	3	

*Case 1:* CM, age 52. Yes, but only those who are capable of voting.

*Case 2:* SI, age 29. Sheep do not elect their shepherds and thinking persons do not choose masters for themselves.

*Case 3:* SI, age 22. Men do rather foolish things. As for women, they are still more stupid, wicked and less educated.

*Case 4:* CM, age 39. When women vote, church influence wins out.

*Case 5:* RM, age 41. Theoretically women have as much right to exercise the vote as men; but the vote should be refused to women who are influenced by their church, and not by their duty to their country.

Among the responses, there were some who agreed in principle with the female use of the vote, but thought it best to wait for the next generation of women. They recommended a course in civics at school, in which the political mechanism of the government would be taught with complete objectivity and not, of course, under the aegis of a particular political label.

## 6. The Sex Problem

*"Do you believe that the sex question is also a social question which must be re-examined and su-*

*pervised? Should it be regulated otherwise than it is at present?"*

	Cases	
Yes	539	98.5 %
No	8	
No answer	21	

*Case 6:* SI, age 33. The question of sex is a most serious one, and in spite of recent progress it must still undergo changes.

*Case 7:* SI, age 28. It is terrible to realize that it should be necessary to ask questions such as this in a civilized country in the middle of the twentieth century.

*Case 8:* SI, age 25. The question of sex is essentially a social one since it forms the basis of understanding between individuals. Material interests assume importance only as a function of sexual dissatisfaction. Money is the most effective substitute for love.

*Case 9:* RM, age 20. To solve that question more indulgence and understanding, based upon new scientific knowledge such as the role of the endocrine glands, are needed.

## 7. The Birth Rate

*"Should we be concerned with regulating the birth rate?"*



## THE WOMAN AND SOCIETY

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	<i>Cases</i>	
Yes	510	95.4%
No	25	

*"Should the birth rate be pushed to the maximum?"*

Yes	21	3.9%
No	514	96.1%

*"Does happiness consist in having many children?"*

Yes	40	7.4%
No	495	92.6%

No answer to the foregoing three questions: 33 women.

We may conclude from these figures that the cause of planned parenthood which results from birth control has won out among women. Among the negative answers we must note that the feelings which motivate these replies often develop from particular circumstances such as the death of beloved children, chronic sterility, etc., in which reasoning plays no part.

*Case 10:* SI, age 29. Overpopulation leads to war. Happiness is exclusively a personal matter. Wisdom should teach us not to look for happiness in others, including children.

*Case 11:* CM, age 25. Regulate the birth rate? Yes, but do not exploit it to the maximum. Quality

is preferable to quantity. It would be better if there were fewer but healthier people who were better developed from all viewpoints. Perhaps a system of "selection" in this regard would be desirable, but this very word itself gives rise to an entire problem.

*Case 12:* CM, age 47. A very complex question. Every well-informed woman should be able to act with complete liberty according to her means and her state of health. At any rate it is a great responsibility to bring children into the world. Who can answer for the morrow: war, poverty, unemployment?

*Case 13:* RM, age 62. Yes. Happiness consists in having many children. I had two who died in their infancy, and I have always missed them.

*Case 14:* SI. Limitation of the birth rate seems to me to be desirable under present economic conditions. An overdeveloped birth rate runs the family into debt or overburdens the budget if the head of the family is unemployed or invalided.

*Case 15:* RM, age 32. Before having children, parents should bear in mind that they will have only duties toward them and no rights over them. Happiness consists in having no more children than one can raise according to one's standards.

*Case 16:* CM, age 37. I've never known a large family that could get along by itself. It always has to rely on the generosity of relatives and friends, which means it cannot live without charity. This is a heavy burden for society, and the regulation of the birth rate would be a boon for everyone.

*Case 17:* CM, age 55. Large families are often the happiest ones.

*Case 18:* RM, age 68. I am the mother of five children and I declare that happiness is in *not* having *any* children.

*Case 19:* RM, age 30. Happiness is not a matter of having a lot of children. It is true, however, that motherhood is the complete flowering, the ultimate expression of womanhood.

### 8. Laws Against Birth Control

*"Are you in favor of repealing the laws which prohibit the dissemination of information on scientific methods of contraception? As a corollary, do you think that these methods should be at the disposal of ALL women, or only, as they now are, at the disposal of the few special cases?"*

	Cases	
For repeal	519	91.8%
Against repeal	46	
No answer	3	

*Case 20:* SI, age 18. These methods are undesirable in France and should be reserved for purely pathological cases.

*Case 21:* SI, age 29. This law is not only a shame, but also a folly which may have as a consequence the degeneration of humanity.

*Case 22:* SI. There are only a few individuals who would oppose the repeal of these laws, such as the clergy and straight-laced families. All women should have the moral right to choose for themselves.

*Case 23:* CM, age 22. Yes, I favor repeal. But as a consequence women should be taught not to hold sexual relations merely as a source of physical pleasure and not to enter in marriage only for reasons of selfish physical enjoyment.

*Case 24:* CM, age 21. Yes, I favor repeal of these laws. But the dissemination of this information should be progressive, beginning with the most intelligent or the most developed, and only ending with those others who, without this precaution, would compromise the success of these methods.

The small number of those who did not respond highlights the interest which this question provoked. At any rate, the answers were concise and the comments few. By answering "Yes," the women brought to light the fact that they wanted to free themselves

from the constraint which the will of some male individuals placed around them.

## 9. Contraception

*"Do you know any methods of protection against undesired pregnancies? If so, which ones?"*

	Cases	
Know absolutely none	149	26.3%
Know some methods (harmful or harmless)	416	
No answer	3	

The fact that only three women out of the five hundred sixty eight taking part in this inquiry refrained from answering this question is proof of the interest which this primary question evoked among women. Four hundred sixteen women claimed to know some methods of contraception; but alas, in the second part of the question three hundred thirty seven mentioned withdrawal (*coitus interruptus*), at the same time acknowledging its defects, its contribution to a sense of frustration, also its possibility of failure as a protective measure.

The *Carton de Wiart* Law of June 20th, 1923, in Belgium and the French law of July 31st, 1920, dictate to us a good measure of caution. Since the liberty permitted an author is protected only by the judgment of the Court of Appeals in Liège—which can be changed at any moment—we shall refrain from including here the detailed statistics on the

different methods of contraception and any comments on their practical value arising out of the personal experience of the women we have questioned, and from hearsay. This is the data we had thought of making available, because of its incontestable scientific value and unusual sexological interest, only to doctors and professional sociologists who might request such information in writing. But here, too, prudence has warned us to give up this project.

We must, however, come back to the fact—one that is filled with social and pathological consequences—that 81 % of the women who acknowledged engaging in methods of contraception have recourse to the practice of withdrawal, a method which may prove in some cases to be detrimental to the physical as well as the spiritual happiness of the woman and the man.

The figures given at the beginning of this section are convincing evidence that the immense majority of women have asked for the repeal of these laws—laws which were drawn up by men with no consultation at all of women.

## 10. Abortion

*“Do you think that abortion in hospitals; that is, with all the medical and scientific care which can be given to such an operation, should be permitted—and in what cases?”*

	<i>Cases</i>	
Yes	531	94.2 %
No	33	
No answer	4	

These figures, eloquent in themselves, will become the more so when we have given those corresponding to the required cases. We have summed up these various cases in which our subjects think abortion should be permitted, in two categories:

(a) Social causes which group together such answers as “when mother wishes it”—“in case of poverty”—“because of unemployment, either of the wife or husband”—“to escape the disgrace devolving upon unwed mothers”—“in case of rape”—etc.

(b) Medical causes, comprising pathological and hereditary cases such as “when the doctor orders it”—“bad conformation”—“in cases of venereal disease”—“in cases of insanity”—etc.

The social and medical causes break down into:

Abortion for social causes	419 women
Abortion for medical causes	298 women

which shows that a plurality of 121 women give the nod to the social causes.

Among the thirty-three women who voted against abortion, three gave as a reason the existence of sci-

entific contraception, the value of which, as a means of combating abortion, is incontestable.<sup>1</sup>

Seven women favoring abortion qualified their answers by adding "only up to the third month," and nine women insisted particularly on the Hélios Bill in this connection. This bill envisages the obligatory consultation of two registered physicians, the compulsory operating within one hundred days from the time of conception, and the signing of a report by the two doctors and the woman concerned, with no marital authorization at all. The very principle of this authorization is rejected by Hélios.<sup>2</sup>

## 11. Exhibitionism

*"What do you think of exhibitionists? Should they be punished? How?"*

	<i>Cases</i>	
They should receive treatment	339	67.4%
They should be punished	164	32.6%
No answer	65	

<sup>1</sup> To understand the scope of the abortion problem one should reflect on the following figures: 35,000 Belgian women killed, crippled or injured each year; 250,000 abortions a year in Belgium (cited by Prof. Kieffer of the University of Brussels). In France, more than a million abortions a year; 45,000 ending in death and some 300,000 by various traumatisms (permanent sterility, etc.) as cited in the *Bulletin of the Society of Legal Medicine* in Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Hélios, Cf. *Lumière et Liberté* of December, 1935.



The answers of those advocating punishment for exhibitionists mentioned only in a few cases the penalties they thought should be applied. Twenty five women suggested prison and sixteen women favored internment in a special institution. Thirteen women, apparently in favor of extreme measures, proposed castration, which would at least have the advantage of reducing the number of second offenders and repeaters. Four women demanded sterilization; three women felt that a public slapping would be sufficient punishment.

*"Have you ever met any exhibitionists? How old were you? What were the circumstances?"*

	<i>Cases</i>
Have met with some cases	296
Never met any	197
No answer	75

The encounters experienced by these 296 women took place in the following manner:

	<i>Cases</i>
In the daytime	67
At night	92
In empty streets, parks or public squares	216
In church	22
In street cars or trains	36
In waiting rooms	4

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In the country	75
At a dance	1
Man was riding a bicycle	2
Place not specified	4

While four women did not recall their ages when they met with these incidents, the ages of the others fall into the following groups:

	<i>Cases</i>
6 to 7 years	2
7 to 8 "	3
8 to 9 "	4
9 to 10 "	3
10 to 11 "	25
11 to 12 "	28
12 to 13 "	37
13 to 14 "	16
14 to 15 "	30
15 to 16 "	14
16 to 17 "	10
17 to 18 "	23
18 to 19 "	13
19 to 22 "	23
22 to 29 "	21
29 to 40 "	29
40 to 50 "	11

*Case 25:* SI, age 30. I was eighteen. In a street car which was constructed in such a manner that some parts were relatively isolated from others—there were

two longitudinal benches placed the length of the car, separated in the middle by an interior platform with four folding seats. In the back of the car, near a door which is never opened, an apoplectic sort of man concealed behind his hat, which he was holding in his hand, a kind of violet object, monstrous in size, of which he seemed extremely proud. As soon as I took my seat beside some other women who were already at the rear of the car, the man almost imperceptibly drew aside his hat and I had to make a great effort not to faint from sheer fright. But I didn't dare say anything, nor did the other women. The man quietly continued his performance, taking a sadistic pleasure at our mute indignation.

*Case 26:* CM, age 25. One evening, in a dark street on the edge of town, I was with a little girl of my own age (ten years). A man dressed in a loose overcoat stopped in front of us, took out his sex organ and said, "If you please, young ladies." We ran away. Another time, in broad daylight I saw a man on a bicycle who showed the same thing to the passerby and sped away immediately afterward.

*Case 27:* RM, age 53. Behind a church there was a public urinal which was torn down only recently. When I was seven or eight, a well-dressed man, in black, with a high hat, used to loiter there in spite of the complaints my parents made to the police. I even saw him there one day at five o'clock in the

morning. My parents and I recognized this man one day while he was carrying a candle in the church procession.

*Case 28:* SD, age 28. I was fifteen or sixteen years old. One summer in the country, toward seven thirty in the evening, along a road usually quite deserted a man exposed himself in the nude. I was very innocent at that age and that experience made me extremely disgusted with men. I ran off and he did not try to follow me.

*Case 29:* RM, age 45. Some of the guards in the Fine Arts Museum in Antwerp used to exhibit to the women visitors what you can easily imagine. At that time I was thirty eight years old.

*Case 30:* RM, age 35. My husband (mine was a marriage for money) is afflicted with this vice. Since he is a lawyer, I tremble constantly for fear he will be found out. We have begged him on many occasions to undergo treatment, because I am certain he can be cured. But he refuses, saying, "That is my only pleasure," and he doesn't wish to be cured.

*Case 31:* RM, age 33. Exhibitionists are disgusting people. I was twelve when I met one, in the park of our town. It was during the war. A German soldier went past me in a deserted alley. I had a terrible fright; yet he was looking at me with supplicating

eyes and did not hurt me at all, for he said nothing and did not touch me.

*Case 32:* RM, age 32. Quite recently I met, one evening in a deserted street of the city, an exhibitionist on a bicycle. I had a friend with me who told me that it was not the first time that this man had followed her on a bicycle, in the same attitude.

*Case 33:* SI, age 30. Close to our home lived a postman. He was a bachelor. One Thursday, when I was eight years old, while playing on the sidewalk before the house, my curiosity was aroused by a strange thing; at the window of the apartment occupied by the postman, between the curtains, appeared a kind of arm, very short, from which ran out a white liquid, falling into a vase that was put there for the purpose. I understood nothing of the meaning of this sight, but I asked no explanations.

*Case 34:* RM, age 32. In a tent, during a dance in the country last summer I saw a man who, in the middle of the dance, opened his trousers and showed his sex organ to his partner.

The exhibitionist is a problem of social sexology to which one has not given the important consideration that it requires. The responses of my correspondents demonstrated that the majority of women have had, at some time of their lives, encounters of such kind. The statistical curve enlightens the fact

that it is particularly at the time of puberty that they happen.

Cases 28 and 31 are typical of the psychic traumas caused to the women by these incidents. Frequently these incidents have an influence on the rest of the sexual life of the woman, resulting in phobias, certain sexual habits and inhibitory frigidity that is not easily overcome.

At the same time there is demonstrated the physical innocuity of these encounters. The exhibitionist is a timid man whose sexual spasm is purely mental and whose pleasure consists only in the act of exposing. If he has the desire for sexual intercourse, he certainly does not have the will power to go any further than merely exhibiting his organ. Consequently it is necessary that the educators and, most important, the mothers should inform their young daughters of this fact, so as to transform such encounters into just ordinary incidents which are apt to occur, rather than allow the exhibitionist to produce a sensation of fear in the young girl or even the mature woman. A chapter on exhibitionism, therefore, should find an obligatory place in the field of sex education.

## 12. Homosexuality

*“What do you think of sexual perverts, called homosexuals (man and man, woman and woman)?*

*Should they be prosecuted and punished? In that case, how?"*

	Cases	
They should be punished	108	25%
They should not be punished	324	75%
No answer	136	

Among the three hundred twenty four women who did not want to have homosexuality punished, thirty nine specifically stated their pity for those concerned and fifty two women upheld the freedom of the individual to justify absence of punishment. Among the hundred and eight who recommended punishment by prosecution and fines, thirteen suggested castration as a remedy, two women wanted the homosexuals to be sterilized, and nineteen suggested their confinement.

*"Have you ever met any homosexuals? Do you know any?"*

	Cases
Met male couples	96
Met and known female couples	138

*"Do you believe that homosexuality is a more serious matter between men than between women?"*

	Cases
Equal in both cases	186
More serious in the case of men	114

The hundred and eighty six women who considered it equal in both cases also stated that it is of no importance. Of the hundred and fourteen who said that homosexuality is a more serious deviation from the normal in the case of men than in women, three considered that this was more excusable in the male couple than in the female couple.

*Case 35:* CM, age 43. A man can always find a companion. Because of our notions of living, a woman must wait for a husband. Suffering from this solitude, she sometimes looks for a refuge in homosexuality.

*Case 36:* SI, age 33. They should not be prosecuted or punished as long as they keep away from little boys and girls. In regard to the woman, it is often only the fear of a possible pregnancy that leads her to look for satisfaction outside of man. As soon as a regular situation appears, she forgets this inclination. There are, of course, some exceptions which are often caused by a great deception. A normal and healthy woman prefers a man. In regard to men, this may cause horrible tragedies if they are married, as happens frequently in such cases. Aside from this, if they choose a partner who shares the same ideas, they do wrong to no one.

*Case 37:* SI, age 22. A number of men do not admit this for their own sex, but they admit it for women.



I know an artist who says he understands such a situation because it is "aesthetic." In my opinion, I can imagine it with men, but not with women.

*Case 38:* SI, age 38. They should not be prosecuted or punished for they carry their own punishment within themselves. I consider it is a more serious matter between men than between women because of the physiological consequences that these relations bring to them.

*Case 39:* CM, age 27. Punishment should not be given. I did this with a schoolmate for a period of four years. For a woman it is a longing for love that she cannot fulfill in society the way it is now. But this has not prevented me from being, later on, the happy mother of three children.

*Case 40:* CM, age 30. The perversion of instinct in men as well as women can often be the only answer to a longing that finds its only possible outlet this way. I feel no repulsion toward men or maternity. I have a child.

*Case 41:* RM, age 41. From the moral point of view it is not serious for the man or the woman, each one having a right to individual freedom. But from the physical point of view, it does not seem as clean to me between men as between women, because of the possible uncleanness of contacts. One can re-

gret such unpoetical substitutions for the messenger of love and emotions. In short, it is degrading.

*Case 42:* SI, age 30. The perverted are the consequence of a misunderstanding of life, which makes parents forbid their young daughters or sons, at an age when nature awakens, to keep company with someone of the opposite sex. It is not an easy question to discuss. To remain innocent one's emotions should not be moved by desire. However, nature does assert itself, the young person is emotionally responsive, and at that time may be approached by someone who is more daring than he or she is, and who makes such improper advances. Young people reaching the age of puberty should be told about these things, so they would avoid falling into the errors of homosexuality. Punish those who do? It is mostly the times that should be punished for its misunderstanding of the laws of nature. Morally, I think the relationship is just as serious between women as it is between men, although the women are usually more idealistic. Physiologically I think that it is more serious in the case of men, for one, at least, gets injured.

Homosexuality is a product of civilization. One must admit its existence; it cannot be overlooked—whether we like it or not. Homosexuality takes on different aspects between men and between women, the reason being the respective roles assumed by them during their relationships—the rights conceded

to men and refused to women may influence the problem.

From the responses which were gathered, it clearly appears that the women we approached had not been mistaken. The masculine homosexuality is often congenital, whereas with women this is rarely the case. The proof is in the fact that even those women who had practiced it themselves do not feel any repulsion toward men and do not refuse to bear children (the product of a relationship with a man)—this point must be borne in mind.

In a woman's case, homosexuality is often a derivative, a last resort, and assumes with her only an occasional desire for equality with a man. From the point of view of repression, indulgence is the rule. The women who asked (in their responses) for fines and punishments had, generally, never met homosexuals and they admitted they had no experience in the matter. Thus, one can express an opinion that their verdict was partly due to ignorance of the subject and was dictated by a rather narrow view of the situation, which may have been influenced by strict upbringing and certain moral notions which would, of course, reject the habits of homosexuality.

### 13. Prostitution

*"Do you admit the need for the existence of feminine prostitution? If so, on what basis? Free or under regulations?"*

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	<i>Cases</i>	
It should not exist	297	54.7 %
Admit its need	245	
No answer	26	

Among the two hundred forty five women who admit the need for prostitution, the basis of it was divided in this manner:

	<i>Cases</i>
Should be on free basis	54
Should be regulated	191

*"Can you suggest remedial measures necessary to eliminate venereal disease?"*

	<i>Cases</i>
Sexual venereal education needed in school, army, workshops	91
Laws for equality in wages for women	16
Law to condemn volunteer infection	23
Hospitals for preventive medicine	81
Free hospitals for victims of venereal disease	15
Concede sexual liberty to women to reduce prostitution	24
Drastic judicial means to suppress prostitution	2

*Case 43: RM, age 31. Alas! I admit the need for prostitution. It is a necessary evil. There will always be men disadvantageously treated by nature, whom other women will reject, and who will have no other*

satisfaction than that obtained by mercenary love. Without this, the number of sadists and mentally disturbed men (of sexual origin) would be much greater. I demand a little less contempt for these women, who, on the whole, are of service to others. I would like them to be informed and to know in advance the sort of thing to which they are consenting, so they will not be disillusioned and end up in misery.

*Case 44:* RM, age 68. One cannot defeat venereal disease, for it is the punishment that God established to punish the free-livers.

*Case 45:* SI, age 28. I do not admit the need for prostitution. To reduce this social plague the wages of women should be increased equal to men's for the same work. The quantity of flesh for pleasure should be made to diminish, by limiting the birth rate. Action should be supported by the government against the venereal peril. More hospitals are needed.

*Case 46:* SI, age 22. I do not admit the need for feminine prostitution any more than any other kind of prostitution, for the benefit of business, government, etc. But, in actual society I must admit its need when it is intelligently practiced without risk of infection. It is not more immoral or unethical than the woman who marries only for money, to be

supported by a man. Knowledge only will enable venereal disease to disappear.

*Case 47:* CM, age 30. I admit the need for regulated prostitution, practiced in establishments that are government controlled, like a hospital with physicians, where nurses examine the women regularly and each man is examined before he visits the woman. The woman should be authorized to practice her "profession" only as it is suitable to her health. In this way, the woman will be able to continue her job under good conditions and to earn a decent living. Automatically venereal disease will vanish.

*Case 48:* NE. Prostitution is a social evil, whose cause is purely economic. Only a better opportunity to earn a living and an appropriate education can, it seems to me, solve the problem. As it appears to me, the prostitute makes use of her body as a means that permits her to survive and she must be absolutely free to do so. She will understand, in her own interest, the necessity to submit herself to medical visits, but they should be by doctors who are sympathetic and who see in her a victim of conditions.

*Case 49:* RM, age 41. There are two alternatives: Sexual liberty for all women, or prostitution for a few of them. I would very well consider prostitution controlled by law, subsidized by government pay, because those women bestow physical comforts and

contribute to the stability of society. Like hospitals and schools, why not have official places with sanction, offering the guarantee of prophylaxis? In that way, the illicit prostitutes and their resultant dangers would be suppressed. Everyone would be satisfied. It is more logical and appropriate to control openly than to rule hypocritically with vexatious methods.

*Case 50:* One must fight against the prejudice of shameful diseases. In Germany, before Hitler, I saw in certain streets flags set out, indicating locations where free consultations were given for venereal disease. This seemed very clear to me. Large subsidies from the government are necessary to fight such disease.

The responses showed there were great differences of opinion among women in connection with the subject of prostitution. There were almost the same number of votes for and against the need for its existence. Age influenced the direction of the answers, in a certain measure. The very young and the very old women who said "No" were emphatic and uncompromising in their attitude. The middle-aged women understood much better the social importance of the institution of prostitution and they passed less severe sentences on it. Moreover, it must be said that among those who condemned prostitution there were several who also condemned sexual liberty—which seems somewhat contradictory. The

fact is that many were influenced by hearsay; they knew prostitutes only through insinuating comments from men and through the whimsical reportings of newspapermen in search of sensational material.

#### 14. Birth Control

*"Do you know of any organization in France or Belgium where women can obtain information regarding the limiting of births (as in America, England, Holland, India and other places), and where young people can be seriously educated in sexual and eugenic problems?"*

	Cases	
Yes, do know	60	10.7 %
Do not know	501	
No answer	7	

As only 10.7 % of women could admit they knew where to receive such scientific enlightenment, and about 89.3 % were in ignorance of it, the fact is rather startling at a time when so much importance is placed in matters of eugenics and understanding of all sexual problems.

*"In your estimation is such an organization useful, necessary, charitable, desirable, superfluous, condemnable?" (Some women gave multiple answers to this question.)*

	Cases
Useful	469
Necessary	478



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Charitable	300
Desirable	318
Superfluous	1
Condemnable	15

*Case 51:* RM, age 27. I know nothing about this and it is a pity. Such an organization should be established in every city. It should have been done years ago.

*Case 52:* RM, age 33. I have heard of such organizations in America. I think they are highly necessary and I bitterly deplore their absence here.

*Case 53:* SI, age 25. I know of no organization giving such information and I regret it. Such organizations should be very useful. Their existence could be the start of a real emancipation of the woman, for she seems to me entirely subordinated regarding the elucidation of the sexual question.

*Case 54:* RM, age 23. I heard only of classes for eugenics and pediatrics from Dr. P . . . , which touch on these serious problems too lightly and with, perhaps, too much reserve.

*Case 55:* RM, age 68. If such an organization had been in existence my life would not have been the heavy burden it was. Five pregnancies, one after the other, and five deliveries, one worse than the other.

Two dead children as a result of extraction by forceps. After that I was in such terror of the sexual act that my husband later broke away from me.

The number of women who responded to the separate adjectives is sufficiently representative and can exclude further commentary.

Women require the establishment of control centers for information on eugenics and birth rate, to fight against parenthood which is not intelligently planned, and against the abortions which kill, cripple and injure 35,000 among them each year in Belgium alone. Several women asked the question: "Couldn't this task be done after revision of the laws in this direction, by using those medical clinics already in existence?" This suggestion is very interesting and worthy of consideration from the viewpoint of its immediate practical nature for the saving it would entail, also for the fact that it would enable women to space their children so that they would bring them into this world at the time when they would have a better chance.

## 15. The Cigarette

*"Is it proper for the woman to smoke (a) at home, (b) in public?"*

	Cases	
(a) Proper to smoke only		
at home	243	46%
Will not smoke at home	285	

(b) Proper to smoke in public	180	34%
Will refrain from smok- ing in public	348	
No answer to either part of question	40	

If one compares the foregoing results between the woman who thinks it is proper to smoke only at home, and the one who approves of a woman smoking in public, one is struck by the difference in favor of the woman who smokes at home.

Some of the responses contained rather cutting remarks from women who considered smoking in public an inelegant gesture for them to indulge in. Some admitted that the woman had a right to smoke in her own home if she so desired, but that decency required she refrain from smoking when in the presence of other people away from her home.

## 16. Swimming and Physical Training

*"Do you know how to swim? Do you have any physical training?"*

	<i>Cases</i>	
Know how to swim	249	44%
Do not know how to swim	317	56%
No answer	2	
Do physical training	204	36.7 %
Do no physical training	352	
No answer	12	

Considering the type of education of women, the figures for swimming are sufficiently satisfactory. The ideal would have been, of course, no negative answers.

Regarding physical culture, the responses were rather distressing. There is no commentary to add here, except that we can only deplore this and hope that women will, in future, pay more attention to proper physical training.

### 17. Tell Me What You Drink and . . .

*"What are the three beverages which are customary for you to drink, in order of preference?"*

	Cases
Coffee—first preference	201
second preference	102
third preference	58
Total	<u>361</u>
Water—first preference	180
second preference	88
third preference	111
Total	<u>379</u>
Beer—first preference	53
second preference	78
third preference	75
Total	<u>206</u>

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Wine—first preference	36
second preference	33
third preference	79
Total	<u>148</u>

Tea—first preference	48
second preference	88
third preference	57
Total	<u>193</u>

Milk—first preference	30
second preference	72
third preference	39
Total	<u>141</u>

Linden tea (soothing brew from leaves)—first preference	6
second preference	13
third preference	16
Total	<u>35</u>

Kneipp malt—first preference	7
second preference	8
Total	<u>15</u>

Fruit juice—first preference	12
second preference	7
Total	<u>19</u>

Cocoa—first preference	6
second preference	3
third preference	4
Total	<hr/> 13
Clabber—second preference	10
third preference	3
Total	<hr/> 13
Alcoholic drinks—second preference	9
third preference	14
Total	<hr/> 23

Some of our correspondents thought this question was absurd, yet only six (out of five hundred sixty eight) refrained from answering it. The reason for asking this question was to point out the importance which coffee and alcohol have attained as feminine beverages. It is disappointing to see that milk (as well as water), which should be the favorite drink, comes only in the sixth place, whereas coffee comes before water and takes first place with a large majority.

### 18. The Woman in the Police Force and Other "Masculine" Positions

*"Do you think women should be members of the police force, or in the professions of judge, cabinet minister, clergyman, soldier?"*

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	<i>Cases</i>	
Police force—Yes	260	46%
No	305	54%
Judge—Yes	406	71.8%
No	159	28.2%
(Of the 406 women who said "yes," 52 added "but only in children's court.")		
Cabinet minister—Yes	371	65.6%
No	194	34.4%
Priest—Yes	167	29.5%
No	398	70.5%
Soldier—Yes	110	19.5%
No	455	80.5%
No answer	3	

*Case 56:* RM, age 41. I can see a woman as a judge for women. A man will never understand fully the mentality of a woman nor the reasons which make her act in certain ways. The contrary is just as true. A woman, only, can judge cases of prostitution, abortion, infanticide, adultery, crimes due to love, divorces. For the children I can also see a woman as an assistant judge, more as a question of prestige and authority toward children, because I am not sure that she always understands children better than men do. As a cabinet minister, I see her above all in finances. Men know how to earn money but they do

not know how to save it. The woman is accustomed to balancing the budget; she is also an excellent diplomat. There is no reason why the man, of whom she can so easily make a fool in private life (that is to say, in his own personal interest), should be any more clever or astute when the interests of others are at stake. As a soldier—no, I do not see her in that role, not anymore than the man as far as that is concerned, for the woman is made to create life and not to destroy it. As a policewoman—ah, no! not even in the vice squad. There is a certain type of “honest” woman who believes that she is possessed of all the virtues and often she may sit in judgment in an unjust and haughty manner toward the woman who is “fallen.” Such a woman may often have no more feeling for the poor woman than she assumes toward her own daughter over whom she exercises the attitude of a jail warden.

The foregoing response takes in a great number of the opinions which were expressed by other women in various ways. The strong majority who favored the woman judge should, nevertheless, be taken into consideration.

The number of responses for equality of women in the clergy (in the same sense as a priest or a minister) was rather surprising. However, it showed a subconscious desire for the total equality of women and men rather than a real understanding of religious matters.

This also holds true for those who wanted to see



the woman play soldier. They, too, saw only the "equality" idea, but they overlooked the constructive and pacific role which the woman would normally take.



### **Part III**

## **THE WOMAN AND HER FAMILY LIFE**



# The Woman and Her Family Life

## 19. Masculine Faithfulness

*“What is your opinion on the sexual life and faithfulness of a man (a) before his marriage, and (b) after marriage?”*

	<i>Cases</i>	
<i>Before marriage:</i>		
Grant to man complete liberty	441	85%
Require his chastity	78	15%
<i>After marriage:</i>		
Require his faithfulness	267	51.4%
Grant him his liberty	252	48.6%
Consider this question of no importance	24	
No answer to either part of question	25	

*Case 57: NE.* Before marriage it must, above all, be permitted that the young people should know each other perfectly in every respect; travel together, discuss business, have sexual relations, study together. After marriage, the man must be faithful.

*Case 58:* CM, age 38. One must do everything to make him remain faithful, but one must know how to deserve it. So many women are the molders of their own fate.

*Case 59:* RM, age 33. Faithfulness of man does not exist, neither before nor after his marriage.

*Case 60:* SI, age 28. Before his marriage the man is free so long as he associates with women of his own social stratum. After marriage, he is still free, to the extent that he assures happiness, satisfaction and comfort to the woman he has married. He must continue to display the attention to which she has become accustomed, must be fair to her, and cannot become disgruntled by the bad temper which she may display because of his unfaithfulness. The man generally receives far more from marriage than he gives.

*Case 61:* SI, age 38. I do not recognize two morals—one masculine and one feminine. Consequently I would not logically establish a difference in that line between masculine and feminine unfaithfulness. To betray the one that loves you, and who grants you his or her confidence is an ugly action. Any other concept is fictitious.

*Case 62:* RM, age 23. Before: a libertine. After: I will be content with a seemingly faithfulness.

*Case 63:* SI, age 25. The sexual life of the man before his marriage must have satisfied all his curiosities. As soon as he becomes engaged to be married, to which nothing obliges him to have recourse, he must remain faithful to his fiancée. This period of chastity should be brief. They must then become lovers. After the marriage the faithfulness of the man is still indispensable.

*Case 64:* RM, age 40. The ideal for any really loving woman would be to marry a virgin man; although in theory they should both be initiated. Wouldn't it be a charming voyage to discover love together? But we have always been told that it was anti-physiological, this in favor of the man only—and it is an injustice. But we know now that many doctors do not share this way of thinking.

*Case 65:* CM, age 30. I consider that man is free as well as woman. Nevertheless, the education of the man must be modified in such a way that he will not consider the woman as a trivial amusement, and that he should not be carried away with his emotions, especially if the woman in question is not the one to whom he is legally or morally bound. After the marriage, as well as in free union, I can admit that there may be many women who wish for the faithfulness of their partner for their profit only. As for me, I do not share this feeling, for I am not in the least jealous.

*Case 66:* RM, age 33. I believe, in my experience, that a faithful man is never a perfect lover. It is up to women to choose what they prefer.

*Case 67:* RM, age 19. God wants chastity before the marriage. After the marriage the man must be faithful to the woman who will be the mother of his children.

## 20. Masculine Unfaithfulness

*“Is physical unfaithfulness of man, when it does not produce unfavorable consequences to his women (wife or companion), desirable, necessary, bearable, condemnable, grounds for divorce?”*

	Cases	
<i>Unfaithfulness is:</i>		
Desirable	13	2.7 %
Necessary	22	4.5 %
Bearable	313	64.7 %
Condemnable	136	28.1 %
Permissible on condition that		
wife has same privilege	18	
Permissible with prostitutes		
only	3	
No answer	63	
Total who took part in this		
debate	505	

Of the 136 women who said “condemnable,” 101 added that it was grounds for divorce.



*Case 68:* CM, age 37. Physical unfaithfulness of the man is desirable and necessary if the man is completely above the ordinary run of person, or an artist or a genius. By her tolerance the wife will contribute to the work of her husband. Unfaithfulness must be tolerated if for some reason or other she cannot satisfy her husband completely. It is condemnable and grounds for divorce if the husband has no excuse, but in case of a passing fancy it is at least excusable.

*Case 69:* RM, age 54. How many women who have unfaithful husbands would be happy if the husband's infidelity gave the wives the same privilege of being unfaithful, too. I believe that many marriages are miserable precisely because of this obligation of the woman's faithfulness.

*Case 70:* RM, age 49. If all the women who have unfaithful husbands had nothing else to complain about (which is to say that if the unfaithful husband did not think he was obliged to make them unhappy, on top of it all) it would be a nice improvement.

### 21. Frankness or Concealment

*"When a husband has a mistress, is it preferable that he should conceal it from his wife, or must he tell her frankly but not cynically?"*

	<i>Cases</i>	
He must conceal it	189	37.8 %
He must admit it	312	62.2 %
Depends on the intelligence of the wife	57	
No answer	10	

*Case 71:* RM, age 43. My husband has had affairs. He concealed them before. Now he tells me about them frankly. I prefer it this way and am not at all jealous, chiefly because my husband has shown himself more in love with me than before, and he does not at all neglect me.

*Case 72:* SI, age 22. In all intelligence, to hide is to assure the tranquillity of the home and the happiness of the children. Frankness is good only in free unions. One can hardly pass any actual judgment if to lie is always to do wrong. Many betrayed women have found themselves better off by it.

*Case 73:* RM, age 41. What is extremely unbearable is the deceit and the lies. Confidence is a proof of affection. What throws a woman in doubt and anguish is not so much the fact that the man associates with other women, but to feel that he hides, that he is drawing himself away, that he thrusts her out of his intimacy like an enemy, that he tries to cheat.

*Case 74:* RM, age 39. When the woman is in poor health, it is logical that her husband should have a mistress, provided the wife knows about it and accepts the arrangement. A husband and wife must have, in order to be happy, a total frankness toward each other, and the woman should enjoy the same freedom as her husband, for the sexual question is one thing and friendship is another. If a woman has an ardent partner, but she herself does not have great desires, then she should understand that her husband must go elsewhere, and not be offended and make a lot of fuss when that happens.

A better knowledge of the masculine physiology and psychology, an understanding of the evolution of sexual morals and an attitude of clear thinking and frankness have enabled the feminine mentality to evolve in a wider direction. Can anyone imagine what the answers would have been if these questions had been asked of a thousand of our grandmothers, who were betrayed by their husbands at least as much as the modern woman, if not more!

The tolerance and understanding, therefore, of more than half the women we questioned was an amazing result to attain. In a campaign "for a greater human happiness" the women have made their first step. It now belongs to man to grant woman, by reciprocity, larger rights and a rescinding of vexatious, humiliating and outmoded laws which do not grant her such rights.

The responses we received demonstrated that it is

through knowledge that woman has arrived at tolerance. Thus, it is the fight against ignorance which must be continued. If science is a peaceful weapon, it is equally invincible and "more science" is comparable to "more rights." The two go together. It should be observed that one hundred thirty six women condemned masculine unfaithfulness, but that only one hundred one women considered it grounds for divorce. The thirty five women who differed from this opinion referred to their religious principles, where divorce is forbidden.

## 22. Divorce

*"Should divorce be made easier and cheaper: (a) in the case of the couple without children, (b) in the case of the couple with children?"*

### *Couples without children:*

	Cases	
Make divorce easier and cheaper	469	91%
Make divorce more difficult	45	9%

### *Couples with children:*

Make divorce easier and cheaper	329	64%
Make divorce more difficult	172	33.4%
Divorce must be abolished	6	1.2%
Make divorce difficult but less expensive	7	1.4%
No answer to either part of question	54	

*Case 75:* RM, age 41. In any case the divorce must be made easier and cheaper. Difficulty or expense do not prevent couples from seeking divorce at present, any more than, if it were easy and free, would couples who were happy together divorce "just for the fun of it." When two human beings do not understand each other, nothing in the world can make them live in harmony. When the parents do not get along with one another, they are too deeply engrossed in their own miseries to be able to take proper care of the children. Left to themselves, the youngsters feel unhappy and in many cases their proper upbringing and education are neglected. There is no reason why, because a mistake was made by the man and woman, they should persist in that error all their lives.

*Case 76:* SI, age 24. In all cases, divorce must be made easier and cheaper. However, the question of the children must be taken into consideration, for they are often the dupes of their parents' farce. In regard to the wife, whether she be in the right or wrong, I find it illogical that she should often be granted alimony when she is capable of working and supporting herself.

*Case 77:* CM, age 47. Between two people who have high moral standards, the question should be easy to resolve. But if there are any children, the father must bear his share of responsibility as well as

the mother, and he must look out for the welfare and education of the children. Above all, they should not be given the sad picture of dissension. The man and woman should be good friends, should not hurt each other intentionally; one should always spare his partner.

*Case 78:* SI, age 23. I do not sanction marriage, therefore do not recognize divorce. Those who get married know in what they are becoming involved. In cases of difficult or expensive divorces, they are punished for their prejudices. A man and woman who have children must sacrifice themselves and stay together—each having an independent sexual life—if the happiness of the children depends on their not breaking up the home.

*Case 79:* CM, age 25. Divorce must be made as easy and as cheap as marriage, even in the case of couples with children, for children cannot be happy with parents who do not get along together. I can speak from experience; mother was not happy with father. She stayed with him only because of me. Finally he left her, at the time when my education was becoming an expense. As for me, I have very few kind memories of my childhood, except for the moments I spent on vacation, far from the home of my parents.

*Case 80:* RM, age 33. My parents did not get along too well. My mother fell back upon her religion and

refused to divorce and my father did not want to abandon us. Life at home was, literally, "hell." I remember seven sets of dishes in nine years time. Furniture was broken, and there were serious wounds with a knife. I got married to the first man who asked me, in order to run away from those torments of hell. My brother went abroad for the same reason. We never knew a family life, and this because of religious principles which were supposed to have given us just that.

*Case 81:* RM, age 69. Only death can undo what God has united in the sacrament of marriage. The woman must resign herself and remember that she is made for devotion. In case of misfortune, religion is always her refuge.

It is understandable that there is a great difference in the answers regarding divorce in the cases where there are children, and where there are no children. The tendency of the great majority, however, is in favor of divorce, since only 1.2% of the women we questioned asked for its abolition.

It is fitting to state, at this time, that there are many laws in France as well as in Belgium which pursue an objective diametrically opposite to the opinion of the majority of the women, who are the first to be concerned in the matter of divorce. We have seen this previously in the question regarding prostitution, and we find it here again in the case of divorce.

### 23. The Religious Question

*"Do you consider that a religion is desirable or necessary or superfluous, (a) for the woman, (b) for the man, (c) for children, (d) for all people?"*

	Cases	
<i>A religion is desirable:</i>		
For the woman	3	
For the man	none	
For children	22	
For all people	126	
Total	151	27.8 %

<i>A religion is necessary:</i>		
For the woman	3	
For the man	2	
For children	13	
For all people	67	
Total	85	15.7 %

<i>A religion is superfluous:</i>		
For the man	6	
For all people	301	
Total	307	56.5 %
Total of all answers	543	
No answers	25	

*"In the affirmative, which religion would you choose? Could you tell the reason of your choice?"*



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	<i>Cases</i>
Catholicism	129
Personal, ethical morals (secular)	63
Protestantism (various denominations)	29
Theosophy	6
Spiritualism	3
Marxism	2
Free Masonry	2
Buddhism	1
Judaism	1

Fifteen women included in their answers, this further comment: "Personal and ethical morals (of a secular nature) should not be regarded as a religion."

The reasons for their choices, as listed, are grouped and some of them are given here:

"I am a Catholic because . . ."

The human being leads an incomplete life, but I  
do not want confession nor hell.

To give fear to children.

It is a force and a consolation.

It is the only serious religion that has proved by its  
lasting quality and its dogmas the same for all,  
that it is genuine.

I know that one only.

It promotes large families.

Laic stoicism is rare and difficult.

"I am a Protestant because . . ."

It is a force and a consolation.

To become better.

It is my mother's religion.

Christ was a man who was perfect, and doubtless divine and of high moral value.

It admits the free examination.

Life in common must be established on religious principles.

"I am a Marxist because . . ."

I find in it the scientific comprehension of the world.

"I think religion is superfluous because . . ."

Its uselessness has been proved.

It is an impediment to the development of personality.

Only the weak are in need of a religion.

Science proves each day the falsity of all dogmas.

It has betrayed the woman and she is starting to realize it.

Its intrusion into private life is absolutely unbearable.

It is a cause of dissension and fanaticism.

*Case 82: RM, age 34.* The Catholic religion, which is the only one I know and observe, would be marvelous if the questions of sex and marriage were looked upon differently. Everybody cannot sublimate his or her desires toward a pure idealism and the result of this virtue "at any cost" is found in a great number of spinsters who become mentally disturbed and unbalanced. The true motives of life are those of

nature and when one goes against nature it is immoral.

*Case 83:* RM, age 30. The Catholic religion is necessary to all, for it is the only true one. To doubt it would be a monstrous mortal sin.

*Case 84:* RM, age 68. I like the Catholic religion because it condemns the pleasure of flesh.

*Case 85:* RM, age 31. Religions were invented by men to restrain the natural instincts. But to believe in God is an intuitive force that I feel, and that is part of me aside from any dogma which I have long since rejected. Faith lifts mountains. Atheism, to me, is cold and sterile. The systematic negation makes life heavier still.

*Case 86:* CM, age 37. A religion could be desirable for all. Unfortunately, the ones we know do not always inspire too much confidence; there are too many who abuse true religion.

*Case 87:* RM, age 41. The best religion is worth nothing. The human being must become sufficiently evolved and cultivated to be able to go on his own without religion, sanctions or promise of rewards. At that time religions will vanish by themselves, because nobody will believe in them and they will have become completely useless.

*Case 88:* SI, age 45. I have no religious feeling and I have never felt any regret for this absence. I have art that makes up for spirituality. But there are a great deal of people sincerely religious, who feel strongly supported and consoled, and I cannot blame them for it. Religions are all beautiful in their doctrine, but they get lost because of becoming organized and, in some cases, nationalized.

*Case 89:* CM, age 22. A religion is necessary to all human beings if it is understood that religion is not such or such a dogma, but instead a moral philosophy and the consciousness in man of his dependence on the Infinite.

The religious question being a matter which is absolutely personal and should not be intruded upon, it will not be the object of any comment here because of the respect for the private opinion of others. We have, in all objectivity, given the figures in connection with the different questions and the general response. We have selected only a few specific cases because they were the most representative of a given opinion.

#### 24. The Woman's Name in Marriage

*"Should the woman keep her maiden name in marriage?"*

	<i>Cases</i>	
Keep her maiden name	292	70.3%
Take husband's name	123	
No answer	153	

*"Would it be preferable that the children bear the name of their mother? If you prefer the current method of bearing the father's name, could you state why?"*

	Cases	
Child bear mother's name	286	68.9%
Child bear father's name	129	
No answer	153	

The responses fell into a few general groups; instead of giving them individually, some of them are listed collectively:

*16 cases:* The man is the head of the family.

*10 cases:* The name of the mother, for the name of the father is sometimes uncertain.

*26 cases:* The name of the mother, to do justice to the illegitimate child and to the unwed mother.

*9 cases:* The children belong to the mother.

*4 cases:* The name of the father, for it brings to the woman a certain protection.

*2 cases:* The mother's name, unless it be too ridiculous.

*7 cases:* Name of the father, for otherwise, in case of betrayal he would not have sufficient feeling of guilt.

*I case:* I do not understand how an intelligent person could be engrossed with such details, and I abstain from answering.

The great number who refrained from answering demonstrates that those women considered this question of little importance. It is true, of course, that there are other questions of greater importance, nevertheless we deemed it necessary to ask their opinion in this instance. The result of those who did respond to this question, however, is very interesting: 70% of the women felt that they should keep the maiden name in marriage and 68.9% stated that the children be registered under the mother's name. These indications could not be lightly overlooked, even though many women refrained from answering.

## 25. The Age of Marriage

*"What is the best age to marry and establish a home, (a) for the woman, and (b) for the man?"*

While 66 women did not answer this question, we received replies from 502 women, as follows:

<i>Age (years)</i>	<i>For women</i>	<i>For men</i>
18 to 20	7	....
20 to 22	126	20
22 to 24	96	45
24 to 26	202	131
26 to 28	32	32
28 to 30	29	116

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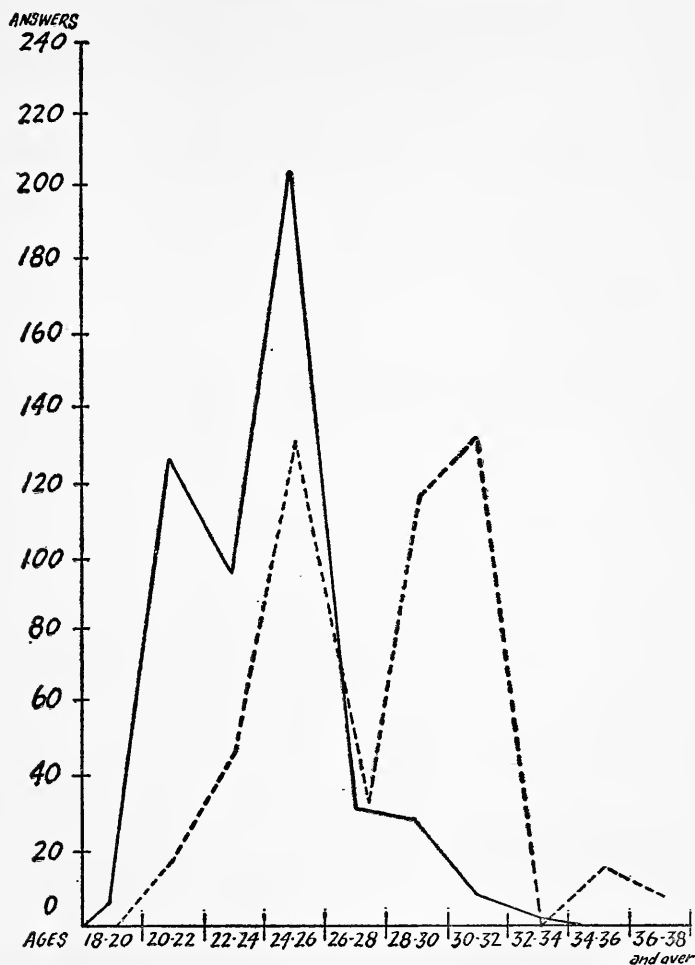


FIG. 3—Comparison of the total figures obtained by classification of answers in connection with the ideal average age for the man and the woman, for marriage and starting a home.

30 to 32	8	132
32 to 34	2	....
34 to 36	....	17
36 to 38 (and over)	....	9

Later in this chapter is shown a chart which illustrates the curve of the ideal age for both sexes—the meeting point which corresponds to 30 years for the man and 25 years for the woman was considered, therefore, the ideal age for marriage in our civilization.

Using the foregoing ages as a basis, we were able to establish the following questions:

*“Should the wife and husband be the same age? Should the wife be younger or older than the husband? What, in your opinion, should be the approximate age difference between them?”*

The answers to this brought forth some strange results which constitute, in our opinion, one of the most unexpected lessons to be learned from this entire inquiry. The variations of the age differences between husband and wife were expressed in the following manner:

	Cases	
Equality of ages	60	11.9 %
<i>Husband older (years)</i>		
1	9	1.8 %
2	35	6.9 %
3	69	13.7 %
4	55	11.0 %



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5	173	34.5%
6	27	5.4%
7	16	3.2%
8	13	2.6%
9	11	2.2%
10	34	6.8%

Attention is drawn to the fact that in not one case was it stated that the woman should be older than her husband, whereas 50.7% of the cases stipulated a difference of age variable from four to six years.

It appears to us that this opinion is somewhat contradictory with the other feminine conceptions. By seeking a husband who is five to ten years older (54.6%), the woman brings out the fact that she feels inferior to the man and she seeks one in whom she can confide as a guide and as a supporter, one who will assume a role of authority toward her. Thus, it is not in keeping with the concepts of woman's desire for equality of rights. Only 11.9% of the women indicated that their ideal of a union was two people of approximately the same age, a man and woman who could find an equal understanding and basis of friendship in marriage, where neither would assume a domineering or interfering attitude toward the other.

### 26. Minimum Budget Requirement

*"What is the minimum monthly budget needed to be able to establish and maintain a home?"*

The answers totalled 419, divided as follows:

<i>Francs</i>	<i>Women</i>
600 to 799	9
800 to 999	12
1000 to 1199	33
1200 to 1399	45
1400 to 1599	102
1600 to 1799	27
1800 to 1999	15
2000 to 2199	117
2200 to 2399	1
2400 to 2599	26
2600 to 2799	4
2800 to 2999	....
3000	28

The Belgian and French women gave their answers in the francs of their respective countries. This difference is of no importance from the viewpoint of statistics, for the buying capacity of the Belgian franc and the French franc was approximately the same in both countries at the end of 1936.

The chart given in this chapter shows two peaks. The first must be considered as coming from women of the lowest income brackets, and the second peak indicates the women from the middle-class families.

Women from the highest income group and titled families refrained from answering this question, and some of their comments were along these lines:

"I have no experience in these matters."

"Living in wealth, I am in ignorance of what such a minimum can be."

"This depends essentially on the social standing."

"I have never been engrossed by these contingencies."

The majority of the answers, it will be noted, fall between 1400 francs and 2199 francs. Official figures for the year 1936, as recorded by the Belgian government, estimate the minimum average budget requirement at 1500 francs per month. Bearing in mind the natural tendency to ask for more than can be obtained, there would seem to be practically no disparity between the figures of our correspondents and those of official sources.

## 27. Man or Woman—By Choice

*"If you had been able to choose, would you have preferred to be a man?"*

	Cases
Prefer to be a man	268
Prefer to be a woman	237
No answer	63

The fact that 53% would have liked to be men is significant. It proves, more than any other question, the dissatisfaction of women in their actual position.

These ideas will help us to understand the surprising disproportion of the desire for boys rather than girls, which resulted from the examination of the

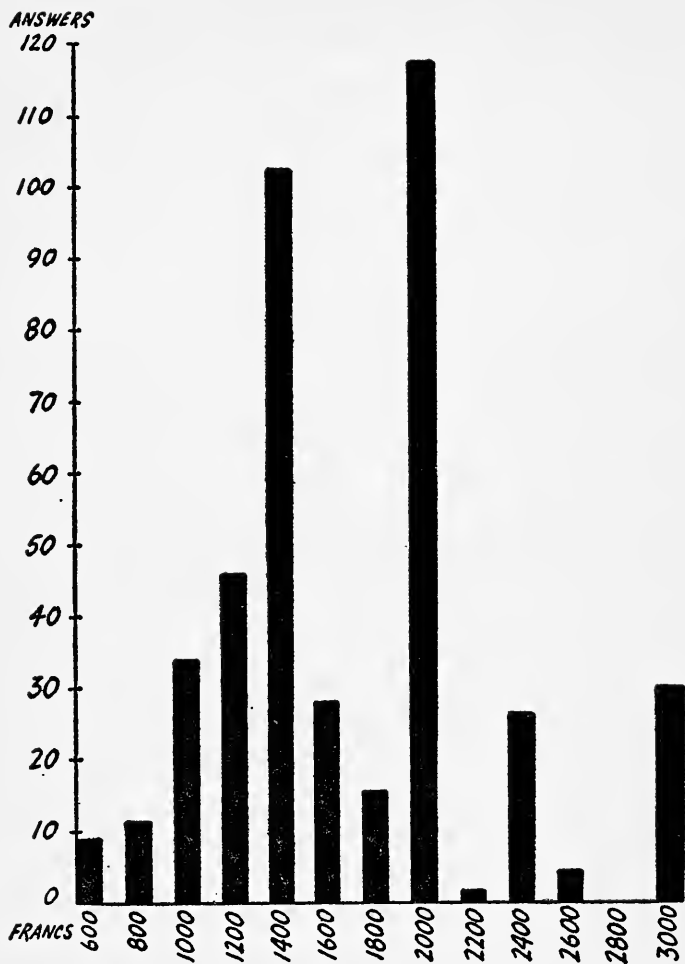


FIG. 4—Pearson Histogram constructed from the answers received, regarding minimum budget necessary to a couple to establish and maintain a home. The figures correspond to units established in Belgian francs in 1937.

answers to the question "How many children would you like to have?"

It was not sufficient to know merely if the woman preferred to be a man. This brought up another interesting question, which is discussed in the following chapter.

## 28. Faulty Traits in the Man

*"What do you consider essential qualities lacking in the male's character?"*

The answers were given in order of the importance which the women laid upon specific traits. Some women named several; therefore, the total of qualities required from the man does not correspond to the total number of women who responded to this question.

<i>Trait desired</i>	<i>Women</i>
Self-sacrificing	89
Generosity	74
Frankness	46
Cleverness	45
Tactfulness	33
Patience	29
"He lacks none; has all good traits"	29
Understanding	26
Indulgence	25
Sensitivity	24
Thriftiness	21
Orderliness	17

Perserverance	16
Respect for woman	16
Courage of convictions	16
Tenderness	11
An even temper	10
Modesty	9
Kindness	9
Unpretentiousness	8
"He lacks too many good traits"	8
Imagination	7
Virtue	5
Sense of responsibility	5
Decisiveness	4
Religion	3
Broad-mindedness	2

The picture of the average man was depicted in majestic strokes in the answers of these women. A summation of their remarks may be made in this manner: "You are, gentlemen, selfish and you take openly too many liberties (morally and physically). Those among you who would like to earn the love and confidence of a woman will find in the examination of the foregoing list some useful and profitable lessons."

## 29. Sexual Education

*"Do you approve of scientific sexual education of children, from the moral as well as the physiological point of view?"*

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Approve such education	<i>Cases</i> 534	94.5%
Disapprove and do not want it	31	5.5%
No answer	3	

*"At what age should such education take place?"*

<i>At Age (years)</i>	<i>Cases</i>
6 to 8	28
8 to 10	8
10 to 12	41
12 to 14	14
14 to 16	69
As early as puberty	136
When they ask first question	180
No age indicated	58

*"Who should take charge of such education?"*

(Some women gave more than one answer to this question.)

	<i>Cases</i>
The father	378
The mother	336
At school	238
A physician	222
The priest	18
A sexologist	324

*Case 90:* SI, age 28. The education should start as soon as the child shows a desire to know and as his questions come. There should be a previous definite agreement made between the parents and the school,

so that there will be no contradiction. The ideal would be if the parents (usually poor psychologists) should first go and take a few lessons from a sex-ologist themselves.

*Case 91:* SI, age 47. I do not approve such education. It is useless; the children are initiated in school by the other students or older friends.

*Case 92:* CM, age 40. A child must be taught from his earliest childhood to get rid of his bashful gestures, which are merely hypocrisies, and he should be informed about morals in a frank and healthy manner. The school or church should not give him sex education; the physician and the parents are the ones who should normally do this.

*Case 93:* RM, age 23. All this business has nothing to do with children. The mother should inform the young girls and the father should inform the young boys, when they are ready to face life.

*Case 94:* RM, age 41. Sexual education of children is an absolute necessity, to be given by the father or mother, or both in turn, depending on the question asked and the ability of each to answer. But parents must work in coordination, one must answer questions right from the beginning without any hesitation and with no mysterious manner. The way of answering is as important as the question itself. A



course given by a sexologist in school would be the best method.

94.5% of the women who responded were in favor of sexual education of children. Do you find this figure sufficiently significant? Upon examining in detail the diverse answers, the theories they embodied, the sarcasm they contained, we can draw the following synthesis: The woman approved of sex education for the child, according to the needs of his age. She remembered the ignorance that was her lot in her childhood, and she realized too well the necessity to change the educational methods. The first instruction given by the parents must start at the first question from the child. Then there may come that period of sexual slumber in the child (corresponding usually to the ages of seven to ten years). After that, the education should be taken up again either in school or by a specialized course. We were surprised to find that the sexologist, whose new social role is still so little known to most people, was designated three hundred twenty four times, either to be in charge of such a course for children, or to previously teach the parents the fundamentals of sexual education for their children.

In the meantime we seem to be far from our aim. Not only is this matter neglected to a great extent in grammar and high schools, but even in some colleges the students receive little indication of these social facts.

There are no courses in sexology in existence for

medical students, and even less social hygiene courses in sociology for the future doctors. The only exception to this rule is La Sorbonne (Paris University) where the professional chair is held by the respected teacher, Dr. Sicard de Plafoles.

### 30. Sexual Initiation

*"At what age should a girl have her first sexual experience—with the understanding, of course, that she has received proper sexual education? (a) On her wedding night, (b) before marriage with her fiance, or (c) at any age without obligation of marriage and with complete sexual liberty?"*

Ages	(c)		(a)		(b)	
	Women responded	%	Women responded	%	Women responded	%
15	1	0.3	3	0.7	4	0.8
16	21	6.9	31	7.3	33	6.6
17	9	2.9	37	8.8	34	6.8
18	82	26.9	62	14.7	98	19.6
19	15	4.9	27	6.4	41	8.2
20	39	12.8	42	10.0	43	8.7
21	17	5.6	8	1.9	6	1.2
22	5	1.6	3	0.7	7	1.4
23	6	2.0	4	0.9	8	1.6
24	3	1.0	—	—	6	1.2
25	13	4.3	—	—	18	3.6
26	—	—	—	—	3	0.6
Any age	94	30.8	127	30.1	111	22.2
	305		344		412	

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The number of women who opposed (b) and (c) were .....	78	18.5	87	17.5
	<u>422</u>		<u>499</u>	

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No answers—69 women

Total number of answers (including partial ones)—499 women

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The first part of this question (sexual initiation on her wedding night) received answers from women who expressed religious and moral grounds for this condition. From the foregoing table, it appears that 54.7% of the women who wished to see the young girl come to marriage as a virgin also stated that her age be less than twenty-one years. However, official statistics in our countries show that approximately 80% of the marriages between young people come to an end through failure and divorce. Thus, it shows unhappily that girls of tender years are not always sufficiently mature to carry the burden and responsibility of a home, nor are they sufficiently versed in masculine psychology and ways of living to be able to adapt themselves to such an important venture without being hurt. (See: A, a', a'' in foregoing chart.)

Considering the numerical results from women with more independent viewpoints, who responded to the second part of our question (premarital sexual initiation with her fiance), we ascertain that they

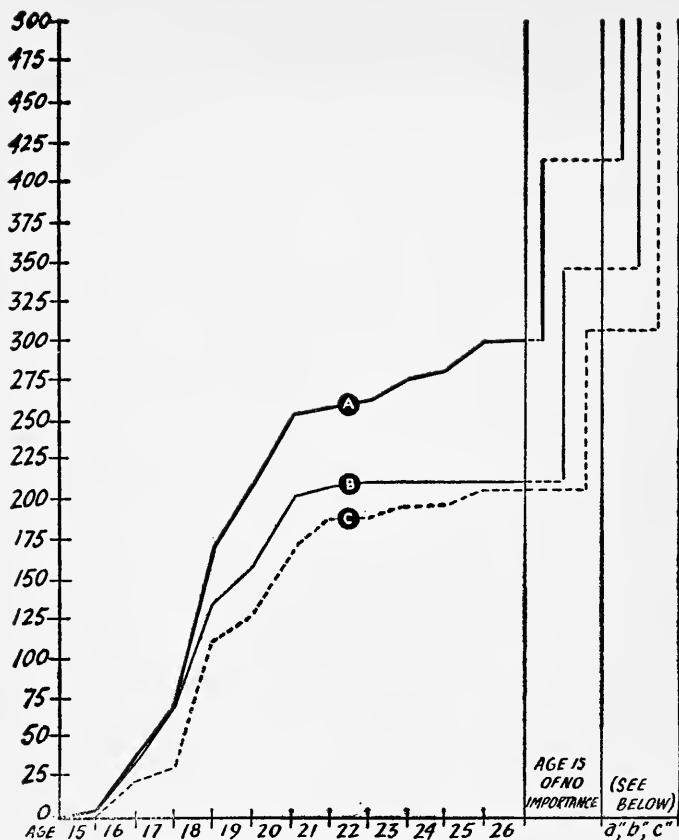


FIG. 5—Comparative curves showing total figures in regard to age of the girl at her first sexual experience.

- A—Sexual initiation on wedding night. (a') Age of this marriage is of no importance; (a'') women who categorically reject the sexual initiation which is part of marriage.
- B—Premarital initiation by her fiancé. (b') Age of this sexual initiation without importance; (b'') women who condemned this.
- C—Sexual initiation with no obligation of marriage and with complete liberty. (c') Age of first sexual experience depends on circumstances and is not important in itself; (c'') women whose responses condemned this practice.

confirm impressively our previous conclusions, since 47.9% indicate that marriage should also take place before the young woman reaches the age of twenty one.

We received 18.5% answers which positively condemned premarital relations. Some women emphasized the necessity of total abstinence before marriage. But, most of them, on the contrary, made the point that sexual initiation may be essential for the girl. The experience would be a better guarantee of maintaining a stable and happy married life later on. This premarital initiation, however, need not be with her fiance necessarily. (See: B, b', b'' on chart.)

In the figures that show the responses to the third part of the question (sexual initiation with complete liberty) we find that the proportion of experiences before the age of twenty-one goes up to 59.2%, with the next age limit (although a much smaller figure) around twenty five years of age. This response from women who would want to see all young women throw off their restraint, shows their attitude that when a man marries a woman over twenty five, he has no right to demand her virginity.

The sixty nine who refrained from answering this part of our questionnaire were mainly from the younger age group of women whom we approached. We conclude from this that the four hundred ninety nine women who cooperated, even if partially, belong to the pre-war generation. They have been able to see, in the light of their own experience, the dif-

ference between the lack of sex education for girls during their young days and the value of the improvement in education of young women today.

While eighty seven women (out of four hundred ninety nine) condemned all sexual liberty and demanded virginity until marriage, four hundred twelve women replied in favor of marriage without virginity, whether the sexual initiation was with the fiance or not, provided the experience was gained.

On the whole, 82.5% of women, belonging to all strata of life and all faiths, condemned without reservation the hypocritical type of education of which they were the victims, and they desired for their daughters an education with more freedom and frankness—a prelude for a more healthy and happy adult life.

### 31. Virginity

*“Do you attach great importance to feminine virginity?”*

	Cases	
Consider it of no importance	438	82.4%
Believe it is important	93	
No answer	37	

*Case 95: RM, age 30. Virginity is of great importance, for it is the sign of physical holiness. God has wanted it so.*

*Case 96:* CM, age 37. It is often the frigid woman who withholds the record of that honor—if virginity is an honor!

*Case 97:* RM, age 31. I had considered it of great importance, wishing to keep my body like my soul, entirely for the one that I could love. I believe now that this feeling was exaggerated, although I have never regretted waiting.

*Case 98:* SI, age 25. This is without importance. Each person makes use of his or her body according to individual moral concepts. Does one forbid asceticism to those who practice it?

*Case 99:* RM, age 48. Yes, I believe that virginity is important; in this manner one is certain of not having been soiled or contaminated by men who were actually strangers.

*Case 100:* CM, age 29. Virginity has no importance for the woman; it is the man who has given importance to it!

*Case 101:* No importance, for there are some vicious young girls who manage to keep their virginity, yet there are some other girls who “fall” because of their very tenderness—and if they lose it in that way it is for one poor, lonely “fault.”

*Case 102:* RM, age 40. The fact having been established that many baby girls are born without a hymen, isn't it distressing that it should cause trouble when they reach the age of marriage.

*Case 103:* RM, age 44. In losing the virginity, one loses the sexual tranquility, the ideal, the dream, what is most beautiful in life.

*Case 104:* SI, age 22. It proves (1) bashfulness and prejudice (wrong mental attitude), and (2) lack of desire (wrong physical constitution), and (3) fear of having children (wrong sex education).

*Case 105:* SI, age 28. It is a physical peculiarity which has nothing to do with moral concepts or religious taboos, but rather stems from some ridiculous and unfair ideas of ownership.

Nature has provided virginity to the infant girl (as it gave the foreskin to the boy) in a goal that is purely physiological. The hymen must close and shelter the tender genital organs from infectious germs which might enter from the outside, until menstruation (corresponding to the final development) which takes care of the periodical elimination of any such germs. Any other attitude about the hymen is an unhealthy product of a feeling of possessiveness, which only proper sex education can eliminate.



### 32. Defloration

*"Would it be preferable to deflorate infant girls at birth, through medical means?"*

	Cases	
It would be preferable	316	63.3%
Against defloration	183	
No answer	69	

*Case 106:* RM, age 42. It would be preferable, in our existing state of civilization, because of the prejudice which is attached to virginity. If men were less stupid—and less conceited—it would not be necessary. Besides, it is easy for the artful woman to simulate virginity and fool the man anyway.

*Case 107:* RM, age 33. This idea seems rather unpleasant. We do not have the right to dispose of a thing that belongs to our children and not to us.

*Case 108:* CM, age 47. I think that in deflorating medically at birth, a physical pain which is always disagreeable would be avoided later. It would be, in addition, an excellent way to fight against prejudice and man's perversity.

*Case 109:* CM, age 40. What a strange idea—to have the surgeon interfere with something that belongs to nature's function.

*Case 110:* CM, age 25. I see no objection to that. It would prevent certain minor conflicts between mar-

riage partners. Certain men believe that they have been robbed if they cannot make a woman suffer during their first relation.

*Case 111:* SD, age 32. It would be effectively preferable, unless the hymen is useful to protect the organs. In that case, the young girls should have themselves deflorated medically when they are ready for their sexual initiation.

It is not surprising to find the fact established that 63.3% of the women approved the idea of defloration in principle. It is obvious that if they had all known the physiological side of this question, their answers might have been different in regard to the time of such operation.

At the end of the previous chapter (Virginity) we explained the goal that nature has pursued in giving the hymen to the infant girl; however, it is sometimes absent and is thus not fulfilling the functions for which it was intended. We consider, therefore, that birth is not the time when this resection should take place, any more than we can follow the suggestion given in Case 111, for we cannot imagine a young girl in love dropping into the gynecologist's office before going to her sexual initiation.

We can only recommend that the medical defloration of the infant be done only if such operation reveals itself as necessary upon the physician's examination at that time—or upon examination after the girl's first menstruation. The hymen's physiological

existence has no necessity to remain after that first period, as the requirements of hygiene are then safe, and its disappearance would eliminate the ridiculous masculine prejudice of virginity.

### 33. Feminine Faithfulness

*"Do you consider physical faithfulness of the woman to one man as: necessary, desirable, superfluous, without importance—(a) for the unmarried woman, and (b) for the married woman?"*

*Before marriage her faithfulness is:*

	Cases	
Necessary	78	14.2%
Desirable	121	21.9%
Superfluous	117	21.2%
Without importance	198	35.8%
Absolute chastity before marriage	38	6.9%

*After marriage her faithfulness is:*

Necessary	149	27.0%
Desirable	206	37.3%
Superfluous	28	5.1%
Without importance	169	30.6%
No answer to any part of this question	16	

*Case 112: RM, age 34. When a woman is contented, it is very surprising if she looks for a second partner, for she is faithful by nature.*

*Case 113:* RM, age 41. For the single woman I think that experiences are beneficial so that she may come to marriage with sufficient knowledge. I believe that to keep happiness in marriage and good management of her home, it is preferable that the married woman should be content with her husband as a partner. It is obviously a question of constitutional make-up. Nevertheless, one extra-marital experience or affair should not be a cause for tragedy or jealousy, for either one.

*Case 114:* CM, age 55. To lead two loves at the same time is not an impossible role for the woman; however, the demands of married life require too much from the woman of small means; it demands too much of her time, too much of her attention—so much so, that in order to take care of her husband and eventually of her children, she has not much left for a second candidate (man).

*Case 115:* CM, age 37. The single woman and the married woman without children are on the same footing. But as marriage is greatly concerned with morals and decency for the family, the latter must be respected or, at least, made to seem as though the laws of society in which we live are respected. For the mother of a family, this idea of unfaithfulness is not at all desirable.

*Case 116:* CM, age 20. Is it logical to demand faith-

fulness from the man if the woman attempts to avoid it?

*Case 117:* SI, age 18. How can you ask such a question? The husband is the only mate that she can have during her whole life; it will be necessary to wait for the consecration of marriage; any other notions would stamp one as a woman who leads a fast life.

It is logical, in our state of society based on monogamy, that the women consider necessary and desirable their physical faithfulness to one partner, as borne out in the answers being doubled for the married woman as against the unmarried one.

A curious figure here is that thirty eight women expect total chastity from the unmarried woman, whereas eighty seven answers to the question regarding average ages (in Chapter 30 on Sexual Initiation) expected this chastity.

We may conclude that even in the minds and hearts of those who were influenced by the education given to them in their youth, the idea of emancipation in all fields is growing.

### 34. Woman or Mother?

*"In order for a wife to be completely happy, must she be more woman than mother, or should maternity have precedence over femininity?"*

	<i>Cases</i>
She must remain a woman	246
She must be a mother first	87

She should be both equally	147
No answer	88

*Case 118:* RM, age 45. During the first five years of her child's life, she must be a mother more than a wife, but afterwards she must become a woman more than a mother.

*Case 119:* CM, age 40. The woman must be a woman more than a mother. She is, by instinct, sufficiently a mother; but she may often have a lot of trouble being a woman sensibly.

*Case 120:* RM, age 68. Be a woman always, for the children soon forget the kindness of a mother.

*Case 121:* SI, age 24. The children bring, without possible doubt, disillusionments, one after the other. Being more a woman than a mother, the wife will find comfort and support in her husband to whom she will have to live closely after her children will have left her.

*Case 122:* RM, age 62. I had two children, both died very young and I have always missed them. There is no comparable happiness to that of being a mother, even if maternity is a source of many pains.

*Case 123:* CM, age 25. At no time should the woman let the mother take precedence over her. This

should not be an obstacle to being a good mother. The real woman must be able to be both equally; it is there that her happiness lies.

*Case 124:* RM, age 29. This question seems most embarrassing to me. I am a mother, and I am a woman. According to circumstances the mother wins the victory—but then the woman reclaims her and the mother concedes to the woman. I do not believe that a very good mother can be, at the same time, a very good wife. The exclusive devotion to the child is not a guarantee for happiness. How many mothers have “sacrificed” themselves for their children, then have oppressed them, forgetting that the little ones are growing up and don’t care a straw for that so-called sacrifice. The child has a right to the most independent and affectionate life, but it must not be a life which the mother will always possess. The being to whom she has given birth is going to grow and is going to mature and be “himself” finally. How many times has it happened that the wrong tenderness of the mother stands in the way of the harmonious blossoming of the child? The parents should be the best and most understanding friends of their children. It is the most beautiful part for parents to play toward their children, and also (from a distance, without being possessive) the most useful.

The modern woman has at last understood that while still being a good mother, it is necessary for her to remain a woman. Without even considering

any disillusionment or sorrows that the children often cause their mothers, it is certain that the woman realizes she is the wife of her husband and that it is with him she will always have to live, especially when the children will fly with their own wings. How can a woman rebuild conjugal happiness at that time, if during the early years of her children's lives the wife neglected to be the amorous woman and was her husband's companion only for the benefit of her children? This explains why only so small a percentage of women want to be mothers first. We fear that there may be, in this percentage, numerous women disillusioned not by their children, but by their husbands, and for whom the exaggeration of maternity has been only a psychic transposition of sexual love.

### 35. Marriage as an Institution

*"Do you believe that the institution of marriage is perfect, or that it should be changed? Should marriage be based on a greater sense of freedom and comradeship between husband and wife?"*

A total of four hundred ninety women answered this question, and some of them sent in two separate answers to it:

	Cases	
Institution of marriage		
should be changed	378	77%
It must not be changed	112	



Made free, more comrade-	
ship	180
Less familiarity than at	
present	22
No answer	78

*"What is your suggestion to reduce the number of unhappy homes?"*

<i>Suggestions</i>	<i>Cases</i>
Require greater ease in divorce	16
See the solution in possibility of limiting births	13
Require that the spirit of marriage allow more liberty to both partners	103
Believe that granting all equal rights to woman would make happier couples	33
Require sex education of the woman	52
Require entering marriage on a trial basis	40
Claim no more, no less, than the suppression of marriage	21
Demand less jealousy on the part of the man	10

*Case 125: RM, age 54. "Marriage is a challenge to nature," said Maeterlinck.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> What human ingratitude! Without marriage no genealogical tree, and without this, how could the noble Count Maeterlinck prove his unblemished filiation which goes back, as it is well known, to *Pelleas and Melisande*?

See *The Sexual Morals and Ethics*, by same author.

*Case 126:* RM, age 33. It is part of the woman's role to interest herself more in her husband's life, in his work and amusements. He must find in her a friend, a pal, a companion for the good and bad days.

*Case 127:* RM, age 30. The unhappy homes are caused by lack of religion. Suffering is the share of our humanity, only the Lord can redeem us.

*Case 128:* RM, age 33. The true recipe for the happy home is to leave the illusion of faithfulness and love to each one.

*Case 129:* RM, age 39. A home must be founded as a free association where each partner remains free in his inner thoughts, in his private and personal life, assuming only the obligation to support one another during life in perfect friendship—respecting the personality and the dignity of the wedded partner. There is one duty only—it is that of bringing up and educating the children, also the maintenance of the companion (husband or wife) if that person finds it impossible to meet the difficulties of life.

*Case 130:* RM, age 45. To reduce the number of unhappy homes? Follow the suggestions given by Marc Lanval.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This refers, no doubt, to my books, "The Conjugal Conflict," and "Psychical Barriers Before Love."

*Case 131:* RM, age 23. Free comradeship between husband and wife is Utopia.

*Case 132:* SD, age 58. Here is the advice of the woman doctor: "Do not always cohabit, and maintain separate rooms."

*Case 133:* RM, age 24. This out-of-date institution of contemporary marriage should be widened in scope, ventilated, liberated. Humans should be educated from a sexual point of view, especially the man so that he would know suitably his profession of lover. Give as a rule of marriage an absolute frankness and confidence; oblige the husband and wife (and the future husband and wife) to decide and arrange everything themselves; and finally (but this would be too wonderful!) isolate the parents, except in the extremely rare case where they are understanding—in that case, they would keep away of their own initiative.

*Case 134:* RM, age 44. The social way of living must change. Couples do not get along together by lack of ideal and only because they live so closely side by side. The individual needs more human exchanges and on a larger scale—that is why the family circle is too narrow. I think they should take an active part in community life (outside their own home) and the couple will remain better united.

It would doubtless be an exaggeration to say that

the woman finds the actual institution of marriage perfect, for 77 % consider that it should be changed. The tendency is distinctly toward a companionship (a pal) style of marriage, which indicates an equality of rights (civil and moral) and of duties. Physical faithfulness might perhaps lose by it, but as up to this time this word was generally pronounced "hypocrisy" the loss is not great.

There is a lot still to be said on this question and many others. But we must, unfortunately, limit ourselves to generalities so as not to go beyond the outline of this book, and we must leave to our readers the continuation of the discussions from their own reactions and to draw from them the conclusions that best fit the diverse specific situations.

### **36. Why Does Conjugal Happiness Die?**

*"What are, according to you and from the experiences that you may have witnessed, the genuine reasons for divorce and for such numerous failures of conjugal happiness?"*

While thirty four women refrained from answering this question, we did receive a total of five hundred thirty four responses. They brought us diverse causes, which we list here:

<i>Reasons</i>	<i>Cases</i>
Sexual incompatability	158
Finance trouble, poverty	157

Temperamental (disposition) incompatibility	106
Lack of sexual education	82
Lack of social and psychological education	75
Possessiveness, conjugal act a "duty"	73
Lack of pre-marital sex relations	70
Jealousy	57
Love of luxury, extravagance in clothes, pleasures	54
Lack of understanding and kindness on man's part	53
Physical unfaithfulness	52
Inconsiderateness in the consummation of marriage	39
Egotism (of husband or wife)	37
Different interests	36
Marriage consummated under false pretenses	30
Lack of frankness	25
Too frequent pregnancies	23
Spirit of domination (wants to "swallow up" partner)	22
Husband or wife too young	21
Enervating habit of withdrawal	19
Hypocrisy and cheating	18
Lack of religious principles	17
Alcoholism of the man	16
Influence of the parents and/or the in-laws	14

Absence of the rights for women	13
Negligence in woman's attire	8
Sexual curiosity quickly satiated	7
Abandonment of wife	7
Gambling that ruins; races, speculations	6
Absence of virginity	3
Religious fanaticism	3
Constant cohabitation	2
Legal existence of divorce	2
Man is over-sexed	1
Political differences of opinions	1

This table is self-explanatory, but attention is nevertheless drawn to the fact that in spite of the tremendous importance of the financial question in marriage, the sexual incompatability still prevails over it. It would perhaps be suitable to keep in mind that what we are now writing is a conclusion to a study published previously "that marriage can only be the ratification of a state of things and cannot be the prelude to it."<sup>1</sup>

Effectively when one examines the causes and gives thought to them, it must be admitted that most of them are inevitable and spring from the ignorance of the wedded couple. Therefore, it is not so much the institution of marriage that should be changed as the spirit that presides over it. Above all, the conventions between husband and wife ought to be

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Sexual Morals and Ethics* by the same author.

changed; it is absolutely necessary that their education should be completed in every way.

### 37. Sexual Freedom

*"Would you grant sexual freedom to your daughter, provided she had the proper sexual education?"*

	Cases	
Would grant this freedom	396	75.4%
Would not grant it	129	
No answer	43	

*Case 135:* RM, age 36. This is the most difficult question in the whole inquiry. For centuries we have been taught that this would be dishonor. In spite of all our good intentions to get rid of old prejudices, in spite of everything, a kind of fear persists inside of us. But I believe, all the same, that if my daughter became acquainted with a young man who loved her and whom she would also love, I would not consider it a misfortune if she had sexual relations with this young man.

*Case 136:* RM, age 29. No; but only because of the danger of maternity.

*Case 137:* SI, age 25. I have no daughter, but I would agree to sexual freedom for her as long as her health would not be involved. After the age of twenty one, I would not make any restrictions.

It is true, this question was by far the most diffi-

cult of the entire inquiry. One easily assumes certain rights and actions; but when the problem arises as to whether to grant or agree to such rights and actions for another (especially to one's own daughter in the matter of sex) it becomes a matter of much hesitancy and thought. Nevertheless, the answers were plain and categorical: 75.4% of the women (the majority of them mothers) did not hesitate to say they would grant their daughters the same freedom they would (but could no longer hope to) allow for themselves.

### 38. Free Speech at Home

*"Do you agree that free discussion of sexual problems should take place in the bosom of your family?"*

	Cases	
Approve free discussion	460	81.7%
Do not approve of it	103	
No answer	5	

Only one fact is significant in these answers: 81.7% of the women of today agree on this point—that problems of sexual life should be freely discussed with the seriousness that such matters involve, in the bosom of the family.

### 39. Nudity of the Parents

*"Do you approve of permitting children to see their parents nude?"*



	Cases	
Should be permitted	342	60.3%
Not permitted	225	
No answer	1	

This is the place to quote: "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." Frankness in words is more easily admitted than frankness in deeds. The very high percentage of 81.7% (in question 38) went down, in this instance, to 60.3%.

Actually, this is a matter of sex education, since it is only when the children have been accustomed to this frankness from their most tender age, that the practice of seeing their parents in the nude involves no danger at all. It isn't possible to suddenly change the mode of education once the children have reached adulthood, or at least have gone beyond the period of puberty. Many women guessed this fact, without exactly analyzing the motives that induced them to answer negatively.

#### 40. Nudism

*"Do you understand what is meant by 'nudism'?"*

	Cases
Yes	239
No	327
No answer	2

*"Do you approve the practice of nudism, for others?"*

## AN INQUIRY INTO THE INTIMATE LIVES OF WOMEN

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	<i>Cases</i>	
Yes	277	48.9%
No	289	
No answer	2	

*"Do you practice nudism, even if only occasionally?"*

	<i>Cases</i>	
Yes	68	12%
No	498	
No answer	2	

*Case 138:* SI, age 65. Even if it is only with a vine leaf, hide that abomination!

*Case 139:* CM, age 47. I approve of nudism only among clean-minded people.

*Case 140:* RM, age 29. I practice it. I approve of children and parents doing so, because it has no importance for the child and he is not in the least disturbed over nudism.

Our opinion on the question is known. We published, in 1931, a book<sup>1</sup> that had its time of celebrity—those were heroic times! Since then times have changed—48.9% of the women approved of the practice of nudism for others, and 12% among them are adherents themselves. A few years ago only an intelligent elite, of superior morality, could contemplate human nudity without calling forth the wrath of the populace.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Bronze Skins* (Le Laurier, Publisher) now out of print.

**Part IV**  
**THE INTIMATE LIVES OF WOMEN**



# The Intimate Lives of Women

## 41. Menstruation

*"How old were you when you menstruated for the first time?"*

<i>Age (years)</i>	<i>Cases</i>
10 to 11	6
11 to 12	83
12 to 13	121
13 to 14	126
14 to 15	122
15 to 16	58
16 to 17	22
17 to 18	20
18 to 19	3
No answer	7

The average age for the first menstruation, in our climate, takes place between the thirteenth and fourteenth year.

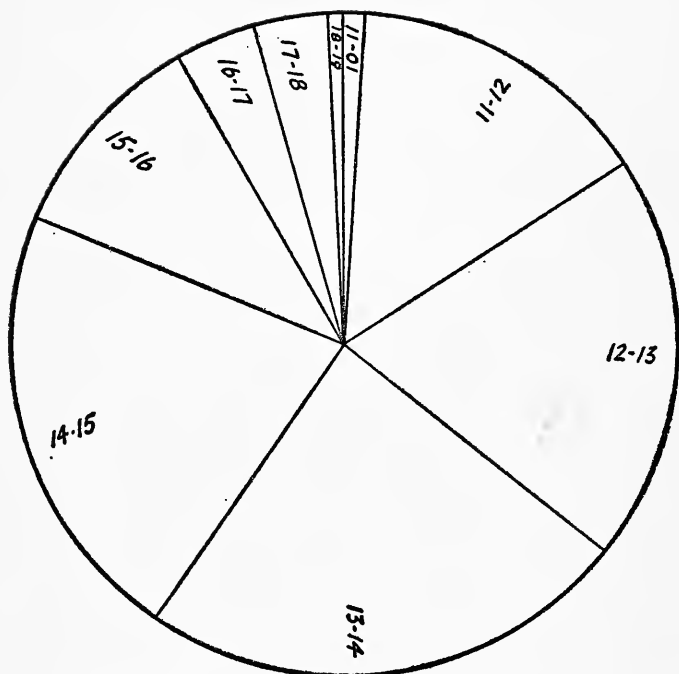


FIG. 6—Diagram of the age of first menstruation.

## 42. Menstrual Difficulties

*"Do you, or did you, experience any menstrual troubles? Is it regular or irregular?"*

	Cases
Had troubles	225
Have regular menstruation	342
No answer	1

More than a third (exactly 39.6% ) of women have had menstrual difficulties. We draw particular attention to this, because it is an important fact in connection with the result of the adverse publicity concerning the natural birth control method—this method is based on abstaining from any sexual relations during the period of ovulation.

Such method stems from the law of Ogino-Knauss, which claims that the woman can conceive only during a few days of the month. In many places calendars are actually sold, which are calculated in advance according to the woman's menstrual cycle, showing the certain periods during the month when she can have sexual relations with no risk of pregnancy. We have, therefore, included as a corollary and to justify this question, the three questions which follow in the next three chapters.

## 43. The Law of Ogino-Knauss

*"Do you know the scientific law of Ogino-Knauss, which states that a woman can conceive only during a few days each month?"*

	<i>Cases</i>	
Yes	363	64.8%
No	197	
No answer	8	

Thus, 64.8% of the women who responded had heard about this method—the only system of natural birth control which was not banned by the laws of the state or church.

#### 44. Confidence in the Calendar

*“Would you have confidence in this method, to avoid involuntary pregnancies?”*

	<i>Cases</i>	
Yes	58	
No	461	88.8%
No answer	49	

The result shows that 88.8% of the women were not confident of this method (based on the scientific law of Ogino-Knauss). The following chapter elaborates on their responses.

#### 45. Women's Experiences

*“What are your personal experiences, and those you may have heard about, with regard to this method?”*

	<i>Cases</i>
Satisfied with method through personal experience and hearsay	11
Personal failure with method	33
Know of others' failures	76



The result shows: 109 failures against 11 satisfied. One may think of this Ogino-Knauss law what one pleases, but it is our opinion that these results are not very encouraging.

It is simpler to conform with the scientific instructions that accompany contraceptives, than to rely on the so-called natural birth control methods advocated by the law of Ogino-Knauss and sanctioned by state and church.

#### 46. Leukorrhea

*"Do you suffer, or have you suffered, from leukorrhea (white discharges)?"*

	Cases
Yes	264
No	273
No answer	31

*"If you were treated for leukorrhea, was it successful?"*

	Cases
Yes	115
No	99

The details of the questions, and the remedies used, were of no interest to the great number of people we approached with this inquiry.

The same indifference was shown toward the question "What is the duration of your menstrual cycle?"

We transmitted this poor result to our collaborators (physicians and laymen) at whose advice we had included the questions in our inquiry.

## 47. Childbirth

*"What was your experience in going through childbirth?"*

A total of two hundred fifty nine women responded (333 deliveries), in the following manner:

Good	202 deliveries
Bad	126 deliveries
With anaesthetic	4 deliveries
Caesarian	1 delivery
No answer	309 women

*"Where did deliveries take place—at home or at a hospital?"*

At home	226 deliveries	67.7%
In hospital	107 deliveries	32.3%

*"Which place do you prefer, for delivery?"*

	<i>Cases</i>	
The home	127	49%
The hospital	132	51%

The foregoing result leads us to remark that the women who had a good delivery at home declared that they preferred being delivered at home. Most of the births which did not turn out well, including the Caesarian delivery, occurred (or started) at home.

Those women who had their children in hospitals preferred the hospital for their subsequent deliveries.

We want to quote this one response from a woman who said she preferred giving birth at home, because the hospital "is good only for the poor."

#### 48. Miscarriages

*"Have you had any miscarriages? If so, how many?"*

<i>Miscarriages</i>	<i>Cases</i>
1	119
2	36
3	12
4	16
5	4
6	3
7	2
No answer	376

The total showed 343 miscarriages, of which 8 were caused by accident.

*"Do you regret the lost child or children?"*

	<i>Cases</i>
Yes, do regret	48
Think of it sometimes	144

*Case 141:* SI, age 28. I had one, and without regret, for I consider such an experience is necessary in a woman's life. This event represented most certainly an indispensable evolution, physical as well as mental; bringing to me a healthier understanding of life and more confidence in myself.

*Case 142:* CM, age 30. (See *Case 241* for explanation of this.)

It was not our intention, at first, to publish the

foregoing results, but rather to pass this information on to specialists. However, upon thinking the matter over, we felt it important to disclose the figures dealing with the comparatively large number of women who resorted to abortion—since we believe that this figure might be considerably smaller if information concerning scientific methods of contraception were available.

The replies revealed, further, that it was usually the first miscarriage that was regretted by the woman—subsequent ones became no more than incidents. The opinion that an abortion renders a woman sterile appears to be disputed in our figures, when one notes the number of women who had more than one abortion.

#### 49. The Wedding Night

*“Was your physical initiation (or your wedding night) a good or bad experience?”*

	<i>Cases</i>	
Good	240	50.5%
Bad	235	

*“Were you totally or partially ignorant?”*

	<i>Cases</i>	
Totally	183	
Partially	292	61.5%

To both questions, the following two items apply:

	<i>Cases</i>
Virginity retained	46
No answer	47

*Case 143:* RM, age 48. I was young. When I was sixteen, I was totally ignorant. An old man in church deflorated me. When I understood his action, I ceased attending there and I only entered church again on the day of my wedding because of social convention.

*Case 144:* CM, age 26. I got my sexual education from a book which was loaned to me by the man who is now my husband. What I did not understand he explained to me. I could not rely on my parents who still retain too many prejudices.

*Case 145:* RM, age 34. My ignorance was so complete that, having experienced only a little suffering and no pleasure, I still believed I was a virgin eight days after.

*Case 146:* RM, age 33. I was informed, in principle, but very clumsily. My first husband was even more clumsy, to the extent that my wedding night was a complete fiasco. That embittered the years that followed and the whole thing ended in divorce.

*Case 147:* CM, age 25. Badly. In theory I was not ignorant; but I was very much afraid to have to go through the act with a clumsy husband and, actually, that is what happened to me. But with a good deal of considerateness, confidence, tenderness and patience on his side as well as mine, we managed to get along well.

*Case 148:* SI, age 33. My first lover was very clumsy, although he was married and the father of a family. The real initiation did not happen through him—after useless efforts, he refrained. Disgusted, I went to a physician a few days later and it was he who deflorated me—artificially.

*Case 149:* RM, age 62. What deception! And all this fuss about the matter is disgusting!

*Case 150:* SI, age 30. I was so revolted by the obligation that had been imposed upon me to keep my virginity for the "husband" that I coldly offered it, when I was twenty (through a desire for revenge, to expressly transgress the customs established without my assent), to a married man who desired it and who had no scruples about deflorating me. At the age of eighteen I would have loved naturally, but the uncompromising attitude of my people almost made me die. As I was about to breathe my last sigh, my mother was able to call me back to life. Now I am beginning to live again, and I am beginning to love according to my formula of freedom, my own. I am thirty years old and I am only now starting to be happy.

*Case 151:* RM, age 32. My fiance initiated me, after I already had some theoretical ideas. After several incomplete relations, my virginity was still

intact. My fiance had to sever it manually, which he did with caution.

*Case 152:* RM, age 42. I have an excellent memory of my wedding night. My husband was very considerate. Having only very elementary ideas, I did not understand that my physical initiation was intentionally gradual and thus took several days to be completed. In this way I never knew the slightest pain, but very quickly the pleasure! This had an excellent influence the rest of my life. It was fourteen years ago, but it seems to me it was yesterday.

*Case 153:* RM, age 37. I was completely ignorant, but to offset that my husband was an ace. I had no pain; instead, the initiation made me laugh hilariously, which seriously caused my husband embarrassment. But when I recall it, it still makes me laugh.

The interesting fact that twenty one cases of surgical defloration occurred, out of five hundred sixteen cases (or a little more than 4%) demonstrates the pertinence of question 31.

There was one case of rape in these answers, although the details were not given.

Another extremely interesting indication is the proportion between total and partial ignorance. Of the one hundred eighty three women who were totally ignorant, only fifteen of them declared that their initiation was a happy one. In most of the cases, the complete ignorance was demonstrated by a bad sex-

ual initiation. The sweet novels, the romantic movies and all the mystery with which the manifestations of physical love are still surrounded, are the reasons for such answers which we synthesize by the words, "Was it only that?"

It is necessary that the feminine youth—more so than the masculine youth—should be impressed with the real facts of life and not by ideas falsified under the cover of literature, pornography, art, or "pious tales." In different instances, too much or too little may be expected of the sexual acts; but the result is generally the same: disillusionment and a bad start in the love life, the consequences of which may influence the rest of that person's life. Young people are never told that in love, too, "It is in forging that one becomes a blacksmith." Practice makes perfect.

Another essential need comes from all this: the necessity to teach young men the feminine genital physiology. Effectively numerous are the cases of feminine confidences about brutality which occurs through awkwardness and ignorance, and not necessarily the intentional brutality of the man's being drunk or asserting his masculine prerogative.

In conclusion, for a greater happiness, the first realization is that of complete sexual education for boys and girls.

## 50. Sexual Happiness

*"Is your sexual life a happy one? How would you list it: a source of happiness, a reason for living, phys-*



*ically satisfying, a sacrifice, a duty (outside of child procreation)?*"

	<i>Cases</i>	
Virgins and celibates	46	
Sexual life is happy	301	57.9 %
Sexual life is unhappy	219	42.1 %
No answer	2	

My sexual life is:

	<i>Cases</i>
A source of happiness	271
A reason for living	123
Physically satisfying	188
A sacrifice	76
A duty	151

*Case 154:* RM, age 34. I do not take into consideration a sexual life. I am, above all else, an intellectual.

*Case 155:* SI, age 29. As in a Spanish inn, one finds in sexual life everything that you bring to it. One can find in it everything your question states, even a sacrifice or a duty, depending on the circumstances. It is important that the sacrifice be made serenely, and the duty nicely accepted. This is a question of will and self-control so as to be able to find in it happiness as the major item.

*Case 156:* RM, age 58. Do women with a happy sexual life exist?

*Case 157:* RM, age 68. I had to go through this ignominy because I wanted a son, the child that I could visualize ever since I was eighteen years old, and whom I did have eventually. The sexual relations disgust me. If society had permitted it, I would have gone abroad and there I would have looked for a man who was beautiful, tall and strong, so that he would make me that child. After that I would have come back home, certain of never seeing that man again, and of whom I would never have thought again.

*Case 158:* RM, age 62. I have only had six sexual relations in all my life, and I have been a mother five times. Every delivery was a torture—now speak to me of sexual love!

The women whose sexual life was a happy one were only too glad to write “yes,” and as one well may expect they refrained from giving further comments. The answer in *Case 155* covers the opinion of several women.

But the real fact remains that two hundred nineteen women declared they have an unhappy sexual life, and two hundred twenty seven shared between them the sacrifices and the duties. This is derived from the fact that many women admit it is their duty to serve their companion when he desires it, whether they feel so inclined or not. A brutal fact remains: 42.1% of the women have an unhappy sexual life.

## 51. Sexual Satisfaction

*“Answer this frankly: Do you experience complete orgasm during your normal sex relations—regularly, occasionally, rarely or never?”*

	<i>Cases</i>
Regularly	144
Occasionally	122
Rarely	35
Never	229
Cannot answer due to virginity	32
No answer	6

Included in the responses from the five hundred thirty women was the following additional information regarding their recourse to masturbation and abnormal sex practices:

	<i>Cases</i>
Regularly	27
Rarely	74
Never	26

*Case 159:* RM, age 50. Although I desire love, I have to live without a man, being a widow. Why? To satisfy social decency.

*Case 160:* SI, age 31. I was unfortunately educated in a convent according to the usual methods of renouncement that Freud has described in his theory of sublimation. Twice in four years I have had a normal orgasm. Outside of those two times, my mind controlled my instinct too much. I philoso-

phize. Under those conditions, and unless one is particularly "inspired," it is extremely difficult to arrive naturally at a normal sexual satisfaction.

*Case 161:* SI, age 38. You seem to lay stress only on physical love. Such materialism is unintelligent, gross and selfish.

*Case 162:* RM, age 32. Normally, nothing doing. It may come some day. It takes a long time of understanding and sex practice on my husband's part to get to a result.

*Case 163:* RM, age 30. Love—pleasure, satisfaction, and so on—that exists only in novels!

*Case 164:* SI, age 30. Never yet, when being possessed normally by a man, even though my partner was doing his best. I was too full of fear—the obsession of pregnancy, and was scared of the consequences. That never made me desire the normal act, as it caused me too much fear and seemed to constrict my entire physical and mental being, so that not only did I derive no satisfaction out of it, but it was followed by fatigue and prostration that exhausted me. But now I am more reasonable in my attitude; a pregnancy would not scare me so much.

*Case 165:* RM, age 68. I have never known that horror, which can only be a sin. Only women leading

a bad life do such things. This has not been an obstacle to my being a good and faithful wife.

*Case 166:* RM, age 39. Never normally. I have known orgasm only in dreams while sleeping, during the period of my menstruation.

The women who experience orgasm regularly evidently had no comment to make. Those cases we cited are representative of the various currents of thought which came from the other women. It should be considered, however, that two hundred twenty nine women (43 %) who live a sexual life have never experienced orgasm or complete satisfaction. If one considers that fact, then those women who did answer the inquiry compose only a selected few, more or less evolved (borne out by the fact that they had the courage and confidence to answer our questionnaire). Imagine what becomes of that percentage when it is calculated on the complete figure of all women belonging to a specific population. Magnus Hirschfeld, the celebrated German sexologist, claimed that in that case the proportion would go up to 78 % and even 80%. We well believe it!

When only 27.1 % of the women can boast of having a regular, normal and satisfying sexual life, it is a distressing figure. We must also take note that thirty two women refrained from answering by reason of "virginity," whereas, in the response to Question 49, referring to the sexual initiation on the wedding night, there were forty six cases of virginity.

Thirteen of our young girls will be found again, in the second part of the table, which proved that they knew how to recognize as hypocritical, the conciliation of the call of nature with the requirements and the strictness of morals.

## 52. The Sexual Act

*"Does the sexual act give to you a feeling of pleasure, passion, indifference, disgust—do you regard it as a duty, a bore, a pastime?"*

	Cases	
Pleasure	401	43.8 %
Passion	143	15.6 %
Duty	121	13.2 %
Bore	79	8.6 %
Disgust	70	7.6 %
Indifference	52	5.7 %
Pastime	50	5.5 %
Cannot answer due to virgin- ity or abstinence	46	
No answer	11	

Some women, of course, responded to more than one of the foregoing categories, giving a double opinion. For instance, many who expressed "pleasure" also included "passion." All the "disgusts" included a "bore," and those who indicated "pastime" often specified "indifference." We thought it necessary to ask these seven classifications rather than three or four, so as to be able to perceive the grada-

tion of thought expressed by our collaborators.

Out of these figures appears the conclusion that of nine hundred sixteen votes expressed, only 15.6% recognized in the sexual act the expression of their own passion.

Many women wished to detract sexual liberty and all sexuality in general; they agitated like scarecrows against the idea of an overwhelming passion, which they blamed instead for all the sins of the world. However, we demonstrate without any possible contradiction that these arguments are not to be trusted. The women, better than the one-way moralists, have known how to put sexuality in the place which it deserves to occupy—not too great, not too small.

### 53. The Jealous Woman

*"Are you jealous? Can you say why? Analyze yourself well before answering."*

	<i>Cases</i>	
Yes, I am jealous	271	51.6%
No, I am not	255	48.4%
No answer	42	

*Case 167: RM, age 45. I was jealous when I believed that another woman was monopolizing my husband's affection. But when I understood that nothing was being taken away from me and that there was enough for two, I was cured of my jealousy. I believe, in my experience, that jealousy is useless; it brings nothing and makes you commit a lot of blunders.*

*Case 168:* CM, age 25. Yes. I am afraid to lose the interest he has in me; afraid of mental solitude especially. It is difficult to accept the idea of sharing what you love.

*Case 169:* RM, age 29. Yes, because it awakens in me a feeling of inferiority to see that the man I love admires other women.

*Case 170:* SI. No, because it is impossible to be any more betrayed knowingly, than it is to be betrayed unknowingly.

*Case 171:* CM, age 55. No. However, naturally when there are reasons, what woman wouldn't be?

*Case 172:* SI, age 26. Yes, because I know that the others are more beautiful than I am, or rather, not so ugly. My mirror does not deceive me, so when by chance someone pays attention to me I feel responsive and I cling to him. Who would blame me?

*Case 173:* CM, age 21. Yes, because I have a keen sense of ownership and a very profound and unreserved love for my husband.

*Case 174:* RM, age 43. I have been jealous. I am not anymore, although my husband has a mistress. My jealousy disappeared the day I made the acquaintance of this girl friend and found out that she did not want to destroy my home. I have also seen



that my husband has loved me better when I was not jealous than when I was jealous.

*Case 175:* SI, age 33. No. Jealousy is a detestable and shabby feeling. I argue this way: if a man goes elsewhere it is because he does not love profoundly, for when one loves truly there is no urge to run around. In that case, what is the use to hang on? One cannot tie a man with a string to his leg. I think that women are more jealous than men; but I think that with reasoning and a lot of control on oneself, one can be cured. The mind must direct the emotions.

*Case 176:* RM, age 24. Yes, I know that it is stupid, but the fault is in the education that was given me, which emphasized the idea that my husband must be for me alone. Nevertheless, as far as I am concerned, I am far from being "faithful." I adore my husband (and my two children) but he cannot give me always those emotions that a new partner gives me; but then the new one, after once or twice, disgusts me. Then I go back to my husband and it is, once again, "the great love."

*Case 177:* SI, age 21. I believe that you are born jealous or not. I admit the inequality of the shares in life and that being jealous does not lead to anything. When one tries to arouse my jealousy, I may

have pain, be hurt sometimes, but not what one calls "jealous."

*Case 178:* CM, age 31. No. I have conquered this degrading and vile feeling. I have enough broadness of mind to love and give freedom in addition.

*Case 179:* RM, age 24. Yes, because of love.

*Case 180:* RM, age 19. No, because I have confidence in my husband.

*Case 181:* CM, age 22. I do my best not to be. It is an instinct of pride, of possessiveness, and of contempt for the other women.

*Case 182:* RM, age 53. Yes. because of pride. I do not want anybody to walk into my personal domain and belongings.

We were greatly surprised to see the enormous percentage of women who said they were not jealous. We made special and strict study of some of the responses and put into the category of "jealous" those who pretended they were not because "they have confidence" and those who gave reasons of the sort indicated in *Case 171*. We considered such women are jealous women in a latent state who just temporarily ignore the feeling.

Despite this strict verification, which gave the right to appear in the non-jealous category only

those whose observations were unquestionable, we arrived at a figure of 48.4 % of non-jealous women.

This high percentage indicates the potential of feminine emancipation. Actually, jealousy is incompatible with freedom. If the woman desires to be free, she must start by allowing this freedom to her companion. Anyway, we are on the road toward more understanding, greater tolerance, less tragedy, fewer crimes and less useless suffering. Who will complain about that?

#### 54. The Jealous Man

*"Is your mate jealous?"*

	Cases	
Yes, he is jealous	211	43%
No, he is not	280	57%
No answer	77	

*"What is his reason for such attitude?"*

	Cases
<i>He is jealous, because:</i>	
It infringes on his sense of ownership	49
It is a question of honor	19
He does not want to share	10
He says it is not hygienic	1
<i>He is not jealous, because:</i>	
He respects the woman's individual liberty	22
He does not want any quarrel	16

Case 183: RM, age 43. I have no other man than my husband, and I do not flirt, thus I cannot know

if he is jealous. He says he would not be, under three conditions: (1) that the man be healthy, (2) no pregnancy, (3) that I do not come to love the other more than him, and that my relations with the other man do not go any further than simple physical experiences.

*Case 184:* SI, age 28. The first told me that he was not jealous; the second told me that he was not jealous, but he believed me faithful; the third is very jealous and I could not restrain myself from making sure. None of the three has a right to be jealous, since I have a heart in four parts—there is always a vacant place, and if there is one whom I love less than the others, it is not my fault—it is his.

*Case 185:* RM, age 34. The rare men, in whom the heart is greater than the pride, are not jealous. But the other ones do not easily forgive unfaithfulness.

*Case 186:* SD, age 29. They have many motives for jealousy that have nothing to do with the real motives.

*Case 187:* RM, age 31. No, not jealous, because others have a right to live their lives. One cannot pretend to be the only one for anybody.

*Case 188:* SI, age 30. In general, the younger men are jealous because they still believe that they have

property rights in the woman. But men of a certain age who have the experience of life are wiser.

*Case 189:* RM, age 68. I have never noticed anything, but if he had been jealous, how I would have given him the run-around!

*Case 190:* CM, age 36. He says that everyone is free, and that two people can be happy together without being compelled to a deceitful faithfulness. My husband knows my lover, and although they have diametrically opposite viewpoints their relations are very cordial.

*Case 191:* RM, age 31. He says that he is not jealous and that I am entirely free. I do not feel any longing to take advantage of this liberty, but it seems to me that if by chance he became jealous I could not resist the temptation to betray him.

Who would have believed it? There are still fewer jealous husbands and lovers than there are jealous women! In spite of a very careful selection and tabulation, we arrived at a figure of 57% intelligent men who do not believe that their honor is transgressed or that they are suffering a loss of property when they allow their wives full freedom. It must certainly be concluded that, whether you take advantage of such freedom or not, it is sufficient to know that you are free. Jealousy has never established a happy home.

## 55. The Frigid Woman

*"Do you really believe that there are frigid women, incapable of feeling the least satisfaction during the sexual relation?"*

	<i>Cases</i>
Yes, there are frigid women	311
Frigid women do not exist	188
No answer	69
Among the causes the women gave for frigidity are:	
Lack of masculine tact	93
Fear of pregnancy	16
Inhibition based on religious teaching	9
Fear of physical harm or disease	30

*Case 192:* CM, age 30. I believe the cause for frigidity comes from the fact that the woman needs more favorable conditions, difficult to attain, and that she dares not demand them from the man.

*Case 193:* RM, age 29. For a period of three years I was frigid with one mate. Now, with another one, everything goes very well. I conclude from this that physically there is no reason for the woman to be frigid.

*Case 194:* RM, age 68. Yes, all decent women are frigid.

*Case 195:* RM, age 48. No, on condition that the woman may combine certain factors so as to attain

sexual satisfaction; that is, not to hate her partner who must know his profession of lover and the sexual mechanism of the woman—not to be paralyzed by defenses based on religion—not to be afraid of a possible pregnancy—and further, to know the facts of birth control.

*Case 196:* CM, age 22. The frigid woman is a defect of our era, on the same ground as the woman anguished by fear of pregnancy. She rejects (unconsciously) her husband and drives him to an affair or prostitution. Let us first produce some healthy and well-balanced women, and there will be much less chance that they be frigid. Many are that way after an unhappy incident (wedding night unsuccessful, lack of tact on the part of the man, etc.).

*Case 197:* CM, age 36. If I can judge by my own case, there are none. For ten years I was frigid. My second husband (I was divorced) was extremely worried because of this. At his insistence, I confided in a sexologist, a friend of my husband. After a short time he found the cause—it was psychic—and now I have been able to cure myself, thanks to his advice.

We conclude that what divides the opinion of women on the question of frigidity is that they do not know whether this condition is curable. Among the many negative replies, most of them explained a remediable cause or an obtained cure; thus they

based their response to a general question on their own specific experience—making such answers perhaps a little optimistic.

On the other hand, the affirmative replies seemed to accept such misfortune placidly and they saw no other remedy for frigidity except a resigned attitude—which is, perhaps, a case of exaggerated pessimism.

The wise procedure would be to have each case analyzed specifically, first by a gynecologist to make sure that the cause is not due to some physical disorder (such as malformation or other local condition). Then, in case his findings are negative, the cases should be studied by a sexologist who would do his best to determine the psychic or social causes for the woman's frigidity, which knowledge too often escapes the person involved and which simple revelation may be sufficient to effect the cure.

## 56. The Sterilized Man

*"Some men submit to voluntary sterilization in order to be able to enjoy sexual relations without risks of paternity. What is your opinion of such men?"*

Out of the 411 answers, we group together some of the epithets the women threw at the men in answering this question:

<i>Comments</i>	<i>Cases</i>
They are vulgar fellows	3
They are silly	12
It is stupid	13
They lack will power	19



## THE INTIMATE LIVES OF WOMEN

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It is unnecessary	18
They are selfish	7
They are abnormal	23
They are idiots	9
Disgusting . . . mad . . . vicious . . . cow- ards . . . fools . . . sick . . . conceited pigs . . . imbeciles . . . damned . . . lack virility . . . ridiculous . . . cause for divorce	7
Against all the foregoing, believing the man had a right to individual liberty and thus would pass no judgment on such action	32
No answer	157

We then asked this question: "*And if one of them was your partner (a) in marriage, (b) if he were forty years of age or over, (c) outside of marriage?*"

	<i>Cases</i>	
(a) It would be right	169	
(a) It would be wrong	242	58.8 %
(b) It would be right	220	
(b) It would be wrong	191	46.5 %
(c) It would be right	228	
(c) It would be wrong	183	44.5 %

*Case 198:* CM, age 39. They are wrong. The sexual love would assume the character of erotic madness, of bestial appetite, which would displease me. It is preferable to practice methods of birth control.

*Case 199:* SI, age 21. It is strange, for one cannot decide if one will never wish for children. The sterilized may often be mistaken. If my partner had himself sterilized to avoid pregnancy for me it would be an act of strange sacrifice. I believe that instead of being flattered by the man, he would lose prestige in my eyes.

*Case 200:* SI, age 28. It is criminal to let an ignorant woman make a start in sexual life, for the woman (according to her will only, and her own liking) must be able to make use of scientific birth prevention as long as she does not desire children. In this manner sterility of the man is not necessary. Aside from that, the man has the right not to wish to father a child on the same ground that the woman has the right to refuse maternity.

*Case 201:* RM, age 41. I believe that young people are wrong to have themselves sterilized, for they do not know what the future can bring or suggest to them. For a man who has the number of children he wishes to raise, it is a perfect idea. I consider that actually forty years must be the age when he can know what he wants. At such age, sterilization is a homage which he renders to the woman. It is a real gift that he offers her. In marriage, or out of marriage, the question presents itself the same way.

*Case 202:* SI, age 45. For (a) and (c) it is the same thing. If one of them was my partner, I would feel I

was being robbed; it would be an ignoble fraud. For (b) I wouldn't mind, because at that age it becomes dangerous to conceive a child, since the man risks not being able to see that child when he will be grown up.

*Case 203:* RM, age 68. In my days one would not have dared to ask such a question. Religion, moreover, has condemned this practice. One should not give it another thought.

*Case 204:* RM, age 29. I have a daughter and I would have loved to have a son as well, if the delivery were not a definite danger for me and the future child. My husband, therefore, had himself sterilized. I am very happy with the result. For the past two years we have had no troubles, no relenting in our relations which haven't changed in any way.

*Case 205:* SD, age 36. Never would I want a sterilized husband. He would have too much success with other women, especially with the young ones against whom the competition would be too difficult for me.

*Case 206:* CM, age 47. My companion was sterilized seven years ago, because of economic and financial necessity. The rejuvenation of his intellect as well as his physical self has been remarkable. (He is getting close to his fifties.)

We were really surprised, during the study of the

women's reactions to this question, since previously many others had disclosed a remarkable broadness of viewpoint. We see an explanatory sign in the great number (27.7%) of women who refrained from answering. Although the interpretation of what is to be understood as "sterilization" is clear enough, we feel that, because of the way it was worded in our questionnaire, a good number of women did not know exactly what sexual sterilization of a man means. This did not surprise us, for in many lawsuits concerning sterilization, the press published much nonsense on the issue, confusing purposely "castration" and "sterilization." Under such conditions, it is not surprising that many feminine opinions were befuddled and did not bring to this question the complete objectivity and attention it deserved.

As far as we are concerned, *Case 201* seems to synthesize well the answer to the question in the way it should be presented to the intelligent and enlightened woman.

## 57. Contraception versus Sterilization

*"Do you think it is preferable to use scientific methods of birth control, rather than the radical method of sexual sterilization of the man?"*

	Cases	
Prefer use of contraceptives	426	86.4%
Prefer sterilization	67	
No answer	75	

*"Do you consider these are immoral methods of preventing birth?"*

	<i>Cases</i>	
They are not immoral	467	
They are immoral	48	9.3%
No answer	53	

*Case 207:* CM, age 48. Where the devil do morals come in here? It is much more immoral to produce children whom you are incapable of raising decently.

*Case 208:* RM, age 33. How could they be immoral when they are the only good weapons in the struggle against abortion?

*Case 209:* NE. Not immoral. I prefer sterilization, because some methods are not always constant, especially at certain ages of the woman.

*Case 210:* SI, age 72. It is immoral because it is condemned by the law of God and the law of man. If one does not wish to beget, or if you cannot do so, just refrain from sexual relations as I have done. I am a virgin.

*Case 211:* CM, age 22. In conquering the control of his procreations, the man is only acquiring a human quality—the right to make a choice.

This question was included to act as a substantiation of the previous one. Thus, the matter is settled! The methods of scientific contraception won major

approval—sexual sterilization of the man was not in favor with the woman.

In conclusion, even if they did not wish to beget, the women demanded that the future remain in the realm of free choice. The verdict is not utterly devoid of wisdom.

### 58. Sexual Anxiety

*“Does fear of pregnancy haunt you during the sexual act?”*

	Cases
Yes	291
No	223
No answer	54

<sup>f</sup> We should emphasize this proportion of 56.6% of women for whom the normal sexual life is made unhappy because of the fear of undesired pregnancy. This produces the anguish of inhibition, and is, as well, the cause of many psychic and physical troubles which could easily be avoided by the use of contraceptives (of which the Belgian and French laws prohibit dissemination).

*“Would there be any change in your sexual life if someone, or something, could remove that fear and anxiety from your mind?”*

	Cases	
There would be a favorable change	291	59.9%
Nothing would be changed	195	
No answer	82	

*Case 212:* RM, age 30. I yield to the divine will. Religion is my consolation. (*Author's note:* This woman is the mother of five children and has had one accidental miscarriage.)

*Case 213:* RM, age 54. Fear is the cause of the fiasco of my sexual life. Imagine the act of withdrawal and the fact that I have to rush out of bed, while my husband sleeps and relaxes after his pleasure. And each month some nerve-racking days: Am I pregnant—or am I not? In short, it is total disillusionment.

*Case 214:* RM, age 55. No, because I can condone this filthy action only when you have in view the procreation of a child.

*Case 215:* CM, age 22. Not for me, because I ardently wish for pregnancy. But I see around me many women whose lives are spoiled by this fear and anxiety. I know some who go through real emotional torture.

*Case 216:* SI, age 20. Since the miscarriage which I had, a terrible fear pursues me constantly, except during the act itself, at which time I do not think of anybody or anything anymore. Nevertheless, after that, and until the end of the month, I live in real terror. I keep thinking I recognize the symptoms. Then there are sleepless nights and horrible days.

Why does that have to exist? For me it is a brutal fact that I cannot have children at this time. But I am not a woman who does not want them; on the contrary, I would be very unhappy if I were told that I will never have any. However, to become a mother at present would be to destroy my entire future and, by this, all hope of happiness.

*Case 217:* SI, age 51. It is perhaps ridiculous to say that I am a virgin at my age. By way of circumstances, independent of my own will, I have never been able to get married. I would have been, however, a good wife and mother, for I adore children. I never found the courage to "leap over the wall"—I am sure it was because of a rigid and repressive education. I was kept back by the sole fear of possible pregnancy, which would have been an unequaled scandal. I have suffered very much. Now that my life is over and I have abdicated all hope, I swear that I would not want to start my existence over again.

A wise doctor said that "our century is breaking up because of its nerves." If so many women are put out of balance by anxiety, many men, on the other hand, are suffering by the practice of withdrawal. In both cases the nerves are those which undergo the repercussion of this restraint. A majority of the women who complained of this anxiety yearned for some change. Once more, the fear of unwanted pregnancy exerts its influence on the rightful share



of human happiness which is owing to every woman.

There is no doubt that the French and Belgian laws which prohibit scientific contraception unfavorably influence the consummation of marriages. Many young people would not hesitate to marry if they were sure that they could count on a serious contraceptive method during the first years of their union, which would permit them to firmly establish their home on a moral, as well as a material basis.

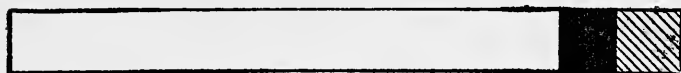
It appears, therefore, that such law (voted, it was said, to favor the birth rate) is fulfilling a goal diametrically opposed to its professed purpose. It delays marriages, it increases the number of single women, provokes great numbers of abortions each year—many of which finally end in barrenness or fatality. Whereas the unrestricted practice of contraceptive methods would leave normal intervals between the pregnancies of women who desired several children, thus producing a well-planned family.

It must be noted that all these arguments and many others, such as the economic and social factors, have been set forth to support the natural rhythm method of Ogino-Knauss, which is unfortunately without practical seriousness and social value. The women who believed in that method used it only because they were convinced of the pertinence of such arguments. It is certainly inadmissible and contrary to the spirit of the law (see art. 6, par. 2 of the Belgian constitution) that this Ogino-Knauss method be freely disseminated to the public, when

the court of justice sues (under the restricting law) all the other methods without any discrimination in regard to their scientific value or social gain.

The generalized use of scientific contraceptive methods would, of course, be a terrible weapon against prostitution. Its followers would soon diminish in number, with the corollary of obvious reduction of the large number of those afflicted with venereal disease.

## AN INQUIRY INTO THE INTIMATE LIVES OF WOMEN



Must equal civil rights be granted to the woman?



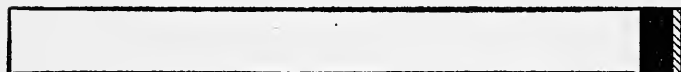
Should the restrictive birth control laws be abolished or transformed?



Do you approve the institution of prostitution?



Do you grant to *your* daughter sexual freedom?



Should legalized abortion be recognized?



Should the woman retain her maiden name in marriage?



Yes



No



No answer

FIG. 7—Lines of agreement of the answers obtained to six key questions, classified according to their “revolutionary or evolutionary” character, to enable us to determine the aggregate opinions of the women.



**Part V**  
**CONFESSIONS AND CONFIDENCES**



## Confessions and Confidences

Numerous questionnaires were returned to us not only with the required responses, but with the accompaniment of confessions and confidences. This made us realize the spiritual good which these women attained in the fact that they could discuss their feelings without restraint. We have not been able to publish them all in their entirety, due to lack of space. This we regret, for the pathos of those human documents is extreme. The selections which are included here contain, however, some specific and typical cases which came to our attention during our work.<sup>1</sup>

*Case 218:* CM, age 33. What I would like to learn in the matter of sexuality is thorough hygiene and conjugal relations with no fear of pregnancy. Ignorance of this only impoverishes the homes, brings

<sup>1</sup> We believe it useful to specify again the abbreviations used in these cases:

SI: Single—*independent*, self-supporting

SD: Single—*dependent*

CM: Married (*civil marriage*)

RM: Married (*religious and civil marriage*)

NE: No explanation of status (*whether single or married*)

unhappy beings on this earth. I think it is the only way to suppress poverty and slavery.<sup>2</sup>

*Case 219:* RM, age 20 (without children). I believe that the institution of marriage should disappear. But, as the freedom that would result from it could give license to a worse condition, it would be necessary to have: (1) A scientific education of young people, (2) the study of social questions in general, (3) better living conditions, (4) a different conception of morals than we now have. All this can be reached only in a better and free society. I think that any serious sexologist, or any individual who wants to fight for sexual emancipation, must necessarily battle against the existing laws of restriction of the individual. The evil must thus be taken by its roots. Help to abolish all that, then realize a free society in which it will be possible to have, apart from other things, a sexual life more ethical and healthier. That is the ideal to which I want to contribute. It is for me, therefore, a great satisfaction to be of some use and I end in thanking you for having taken this fine initiative.

*Case 220:* RM, age 68 (without children). Since its most tender age the child must be trained to know how to moderate his appetites. To use, but not abuse. Ever since I was fifteen I dreamed of an

<sup>2</sup> This was written in spelling and style which showed little education, and it added to the poignant nature of her cry of distress.



absolute liberty in love. I felt such was the moment for me, to give myself with all my heart to the healthy creature, young and sympathetic, whom I would choose. But, alas! I was educated very strictly in France. At the age of twenty I was not permitted to be alone with my fiancé; it was even forbidden to us that we should kiss. I remember that he lured me to a corner of the drawing room one day, and kissed me on the mouth. Ah, what thundering effect! But immediately my mother invited me to join the parents, and I came to my marriage so badly prepared to love, that I had to divorce less than a year later, for reasons of health. The compulsion of my constantly repelling him made my husband impotent to reveal his love to me. My nerves suffered so much that the physician deemed a separation necessary. What a heart break to have to divorce under such conditions! I still loved my husband, but I had to obey, as always. I remarried, but it was not until I was widowed that I met the man who loved me and whom I have loved. Alas! he, too, is dead now and I live in the memory of him. I will always be faithful to that memory, never can I make any comparison with other experiences, for I believe that one does not meet her true love twice. There are too few people who are privileged to experience this, even once. In my opinion, a multitude of women ignore what love is. I believe that they do not encounter the mate cut out for them in the triple point of view: physical, spiritual and intellectual.

*Case 221:* RM, age 39 (without children). How many couples, through fear of undesired children, are not well-balanced? The woman, who is always the victim, says she is ill to avoid the sexual act. If the husband made a sufficient living to maintain the home decently, she would not be so scared of a child; but, too many children are often the causes of discord. The husband, selfishly, does not like—when he returns home—to be disturbed by the noisy crying or playing of children, thus there is quarreling between the parents. The husband leaves, bangs the door, goes to a bar or some other place where he will be more peaceful. But if there are no children, or just one, the couple often gets along better. This child, or these children, should be conceived in a moment of mutual agreement, when they feel in good health and when they are certain that the child will be raised without having to suffer from lack of health or through hunger. It would be a wonderful thing if we could create life when and how we wished. Please excuse this scribbling, but I must do this secretly—one must hide everything when one is a woman. I hope that the education of the young will allow them to be happier than we. There are days when I am afraid I am already too old, at thirty nine, for the joys of shared love. But I would prefer that the young girls be educated, without reserve, on what is awaiting them in married life.

*Case 222: SI, age 47.* My father was an alcoholic and when he was drunk he used to forget himself in front of his little girls; he was in love with them and I, as well as my sisters, were sickened and disgusted by this. We owed him a grudge and wished he would die. All that terminated in a divorce, and after that my sisters and I never looked at my father again. He disgusted us so. We are even ignorant whether he is still living. You will understand why I find nudism offensive, why I do not approve that children should see the nakedness of their parents. You will understand, as well why I do not condone free discussion of sexual problems in the midst of the family. Yet, I was not disgusted with the sexual act, since I gave myself when I was sixteen years old, through mere curiosity. My ignorance was dispelled; but I was a precocious child and a nervous one. I ascribe all this to my alcoholic father. I have always had a ferocious jealousy, but for the past three years it seems to have disappeared. Being of a very teasing disposition, I was amused by making passes at men. The one I loved then made up a little scheme and since then I am not jealous any more of anything or anybody. I give myself to another boy friend without loving him, solely through caprice, being a sensual woman. To provoke the jealousy of my men is a necessity to me, and I experience a great satisfaction in doing that. I believe that I have some sort of sadism toward men only.

Is all this due to my atavism—my reverting to the traits of my parents?

*Case 223:* SI, age 38. Here are the three points to which I attach the greatest importance for the two sexes alike, (a) conscientious childbearing, (b) respect of childhood, (c) sincerity, cleanliness of the mind. The effective life of the woman who is normally constituted goes through several periods, just like the man. I place the age of physical love between the years of twenty two and thirty two, approximately, in our temperate regions. After this age there comes (or does not come) the complete love, which is to say the one where the great psychological factor comes into the game. This essential question does not appear in your questionnaire; it is a gap for there is no good sexology without psychology; one does not go without the other.

*Case 224:* SI, age 32 (1 child, 12 years old). I am for everything that can create a happy life, keeping in mind the guarantees that should be taken—that should be known, popularized and experimented. The medical profession is master of the future; in particular the sexologists and the psychiatrists, because they know what importance is played on the one hand by sexuality (frustration—chastity), and on the other hand by the pains of the feminine creature who is deprived of caresses, of pleasure, who cannot choose but who (most of the time) accepts a part-

ner, a husband, with the never forgotten goal—to provide a place for herself in the best possible manner.

*Case 225:* CM, age 52 (2 children in their late twenties). I wonder what will come out of your work. These answers, as sincere as they may generally be, will they be able to change the state of things? Certainly, the sexual problem is a great factor of happiness in the home. It is even the principal one. I have no suggestion to make in the field of prostitution, nor as regards pregnancies—wanted or unwanted. But, if you wish to bring an efficacious contribution to the field of happiness in the home, tell the men that they should not think of themselves solely, and that they should leave to their wives (often called into action before they have time to experience the desire) the time to feel the climax of the sex act, and to discover in this something worthy of the duty of men and of things and not merely the bestiality of action.

*How many confidences, worthy of belief, have been made to me regarding this same matter—and how many honest young husbands who care very much for their wives, sin by ignorance?—M. L.*

*Case 326:* SI, age 22. I don't believe that you have a very accurate idea of the feminine mentality. It requires a mentality high above the average to read the newspapers and know about your inquiry—and

the elite of the intellectual to answer it. An inquiry of this sort can be aimed only at the young people with advanced ideas (feminists, nudists, anarchists, and such people). I, precisely because I am a woman, have been able to know women better than a man can—in school, at the factory, at the office, etc.; and that is why I consider some of the questions pointless, so far as the general run of women is concerned. Certain questions are particularly interesting, such as that of the unwedded mother, the one on the faithfulness of the man, that on homosexuals, the question on marriage and the reason for conjugal failures, and the questions concerning sexual initiation and the knowledge of love. Here are, nevertheless, a few supplementary questions which your questionnaire suggested to me, and which information would doubtless be of interest:

- (1) Many women who believe they are advanced (modern) do not only imitate masculine behavior, but they say, "If I had my choice, I would like to be a man." It would be interesting to know why this attitude is prevalent.
- (2) If you were a man, what opinion would you have of women?
- (3) Do you dress and put on make-up just for yourself, for public opinion, or for men?
- (4) What is bashfulness? Are you bashful? Why?
- (5) Do you have a masculine ideal? If in the affirmative, which one?

- (6) Do you read Nietzsche, Kant and Dante, or do you prefer novels about love?
- (7) To the women who call themselves "feminists," I would like to ask why are you married, or would you wish to be?
- (8) Do you care for men who have gold stripes and decorations, or who like to dress in gay and sparkling effects?

These and many other small details may seem insignificant, but they would put more light on the feminine mentality.

*Case 227: RM, age 50 (2 children).* A widow at an early time of my life, who had a sick husband with whom sexual life was not at its peak, I have had few opportunities to experiment with the different contraceptive methods. I can say that in those uninteresting relations, I have only been a victim. Pregnant from the first day of my marriage, and naturally not too pleased with this result, I thought I would be rid of it by going on a strenuous mountain excursion on horseback. As a result, all I gained was a pregnancy full of pains, uncontrollable vomiting for six months. I was fed by enemas and serum injections. The physician was doubtful if I would be able to have the child. However, when I was at the end of this terrible pregnancy (my baby girl was born dead), I was not in a hurry to have others. I got some advice from a druggist (not a full-fledged doctor), but even so I had a son eighteen months

later. The second pregnancy was normal, except at the beginning. I had a terrible fear of pregnancy. I believe that all women are afraid of it and that most of them undergo it as an inevitable illness. They know, besides that it fades them and makes them uglier. Those whom I could discreetly question were always filled with anxiety and they felt they were in some danger during the period of pregnancy. I wonder if there is even one woman who accepts in advance, and with a light heart, that condition. From what I have seen around me, this does not prevent them from being the best mothers in the world; when the child arrives, they adore it. Moreover, this love, almost always without return, is a redoubling of their slavery. The mothers envy the childless women who seem to them as if they had no worries, and who are only wives or sweethearts. I believe that, in most cases, if the women could make their own rules, there would never be more than one or two children in a home, and even then the woman would often accept her role of motherhood only in the hope of linking her husband to her. You might say to me, "Then, if there were no marriages any more, there would consequently be no more children." Yes, there will be children, because the woman will always have an inclination, no matter how small, for sacrifice—and she will find for herself a good formula for playing a subservient role.

*Case 228: CM, age 34 (without children). When I*



was four, they wouldn't let me out to attend to a small natural need. I refrained by squeezing my legs together tightly—when all of a sudden I experienced the most terrific sensation that left me prostrate. I spoke of this to no one and I even avoided sitting down for a long time. I maintained a cautious attitude and people around me asked me if I was “walking on eggs.” Then one day, just out of curiosity, I tried it again and experienced the same sensation. For years I continued that “game” over and over periodically. When I was about twelve years old, I learned about sex from my school mates, in little bits of customary gossip. Secretly one of them gave me a little book, “Venereal Disease and Vicious Habits.” This scared me considerably. My parents, if they were conscious of what was going on, kept a cautious silence. Gifted with will power, I struggled against my little desires, but I would dream of them at night. I experienced, from time to time during the night, some definitely erotic dreams that always ended in violent pleasure. But during the day I kept my desires in check because I was convinced that they did me harm. This went on until my first real, normal sexual experience. At my first real contact, I experienced almost immediately that same sensation, this to my great astonishment, for I had often told myself that it could not be “that.” I have never known any pain, nothing but pleasure.

*Case 229: RM, age 40 (2 children). I am happy*

to have our two children; but it is more than enough for our thin financial resources. So, for the past fifteen years I have lived in fear, from month to month, to the degree of becoming broken-down and ailing. At last, I was informed of what every woman should be able to learn freely, and now I have recovered my health and the joy of living. Finished for me the nightmares and doctor bills. I think with pity of all the women who have not had my luck, and I prefer not to say what I think of the selfish who are the cause of that. From the depth of my heart, a great "thank you" to those who fight for the good cause.

*Case 230:* RM, age 43 (without children). I am going to write to you very sincerely that I got married because I was afraid of life, having no way of making a living. It was during the war, it was hard to find a position and I was very ignorant. I have had love affairs, but always very sad ones for I was pregnant right away and I always had recourse to abortion. Happily for me, I found a good doctor whom I bless with all my heart, for I would have been a poor wretch, as men can have fun without carrying any responsibility; whereas the young girls believe they must get married, so as not to be left old maids. Our parents have created us with their emotions, so how can we be expected not to be vicious in turn? I have wept very much and suffered very much, but I am grateful to the suffering for it gave me a feeling of disgust for what is called "love."

I thus married a man sixty years old, and I was only thirty one. He was kind hearted, he was rich and I was happy to be settled at last. I was married for three years and never knew love with my husband. He was sexually powerless, and this made him suffer very much. You can understand the life that was ours. I was never unfaithful to him, for I respected him for his kindness to have given me shelter. After his death, I had a lover—a selfish and ill-natured man. Although I was pregnant once more, he did not want to get married and didn't want children. Some so-called unfailing precautions which I had taken had failed. I suffered and told myself I was ridiculous to look for happiness where it was not to be found. I turned toward theosophy, and there I learned the true meaning of life and happiness, the liberation of knowing that all that man thinks is happiness. I am happy to have had my experience, for one must put his finger in the fire to understand that it burns. Thus all people should be instructed. We must suffer very much to be able to understand a little. The woman should be taught to take care of herself and given time to do so. The poor wretches who have to work late, who have a home and children, cannot do so. They come home exhausted and usually without sufficient salary. I congratulate you for the fine campaign you are waging, and I wish you to accomplish good work. I associate myself, with all my heart, in your work. I have placed a goal in my mind—that of speaking to women, to

awaken them, to show them their errors; but it will be difficult. Too many women have had their minds filled with stupidities instead of liberating concepts. The wrong is deep, but we must not be discouraged. Let us fight!

*Case 231:* RM, age 52 (3 children). If you knew the ravages that the ignorance of sexual questions does to families, you would be, in spite of all your experience, horrified. At the age of twenty I married a young lawyer (who has since become a high magistrate). I had been raised in a very strict family, where no closeness existed. I was rather afraid of my parents and I would never have dared ask anything of my mother, even at the time of my first menstruation. It was the maid who helped me and gave me a few instructions which, however, I have since discovered to be erroneous. In my innocence I raised my daughter in the same manner. I was in constant fear that at some time a question should be asked which I would not be able to answer, even if I could find the courage. I was amply punished one day. I will never forget that it was on a Friday. I found that my daughter, who was seventeen years old, was sick, she looked extremely ill; a day or two went by without bringing any relief and I decided to take her to our doctor. He found her pregnant! I will remember all my life the terrible scenes; I thought that my husband would kill her. Then started a dreadful life. In the end, I found a small

clinic on the French border, where my poor child was delivered secretly. The baby was registered in France, and since then has been adopted by a childless Belgian couple. All my life I will reproach myself for my lack of courage; for now I understand the responsibility that I, myself, had in this distressing affair. I wish that this example could be of use and would show to other women the solemn duty which they owe to their daughters.

*Case 232:* RM, age 24 (1 child). You ask for the causes of the failure of happiness in the home. I am certain that the answers are numerous; but I think that my experience, nevertheless, will be able to help you. My husband is not a bad sort, he has no particular fault and, in principle, we have everything we need to make a normally happy couple. His service as a technician requires that he is often inactive at his work for periods of long hours, especially when he works on the night shift and has nothing to do but watch the motion of the machines. I understand these hours of guard duty are tedious and that, to kill time, he does crossword puzzles. He has become so expert at them that he has even won prizes. But, when his work is finished, he continues these puzzles at home. I do not exist for him anymore; he is so absorbed in this hobby. At the beginning I was patient, then I became angry and there were terrible quarrels. Actually, I really don't know what to do, but I am certain that I am fed up. I am absolutely

neglected by my husband and I am wondering if I should get a divorce.

*Case 233:* RM, age 34 (1 child). My father was a notary in a small provincial town. When I came home from the convent (I was seventeen and a half years old) I learned that I was engaged to be married to the only son of the lord and lady of the manor. He was six years older than I and he seemed to me very good-looking. Supplied with love novels, I was very romantic and he was, for me, my Prince Charming. You can imagine what the betrothal was, in this village. But my wedding night was horrible. My husband was a brute and made me suffer very much. All during the night he called me by a name that was not mine, and he added to it epithets which I dare not write here. From that night on, I had a cross to bear. Nine months later my son was born, which meant for me a new torment. I loved my child with all my heart—and yet I felt he would take after his father and that he, too, would make me suffer greatly. Only recently have I realized that my husband is a sick and unbalanced man. Having no knowledge of life, I imagined that all men were formed the way my husband is. It was while reading a book on sexology that I learned my husband is abnormal physically, as well as mentally. During my sleep he would try to take advantage of me, and was at times so brutal as to necessitate my being treated medically. Eventually I began to realize that I was not

leading a normal woman's life. I was so terrified, I would scream when he approached me and we finally had to leave our apartment in town to go live in the country. During this time his parents became financially ruined because of a bank crash, and so we had to get ourselves out of new difficulties. Fortunately, both of us found employment in the village, to which we had to return. Because I do not want to satisfy my husband's viciousness, he beats me and that only incites him all the more. I have complained to my parents, who do not want to hear anything about it. My marriage to the owner of a name of importance has filled them with so much pride that the idea of a separation from my husband makes them furious. Therefore, I cannot count on any help from them, and I do not make a living that allows me to support my child and me. There can be no discussion regarding divorce, since the religious beliefs of the two families oppose such action. I am in constant fear for my life when my husband has his spells, but the doctor assures me there is no danger at the moment. What I am most afraid of is that I may contract a venereal disease, as my husband has questionable acquaintances among individuals of his kind. I have noticed that my son, who is at the age of puberty, has the same malformation as my husband. The physician says it can be operated on, but I do not know if that will make any difference in his disposition. I do not know to whom I may have recourse.

*Case 234:* CM, age 33 (1 child). I think that you don't find many cases like mine. I was a salesclerk in a large store, my husband was section manager. As I never wanted to accept his invitations to go out dancing or for a walk, he became persistent, was crazy about me and eventually we married. He lived with his mother who had a tobacco store. There was quite a fuss because I wanted to live alone with my husband, since I don't like my mother-in-law (a widow). The first months of our marriage were happy. I had my husband all to myself, but he got tired of me quickly, especially because my pregnancy had spoiled my appearance very much. My child died after a few days. While I was confined, my husband started the habit of going back to his mother's home and so she regained all her influence over him. He became more and more annoying to me. One Sunday when we had gone to dinner at his mother's, a terrible quarrel exploded. I do not recall the reason, but his mother threw herself at her son's feet, to beseech him to leave me and get a divorce. Finally my husband and his mother threw me out, at 11:30 on a cold night. I didn't have the key to our home. I had to go to one of my relatives and spend the night there. My husband took advantage of this to go to the police and say that I had run away from our home. Fortunately, I had my relative's testimony. The judge wanted to reconcile us, but after the insult that I had received, I had no wish for a reconciliation. My husband has gone back to live with his



mother. My mother-in-law speaks to her son as a sweetheart would talk to a lover. They kiss all the time, and behave in a scandalous manner. However, since she is his mother, I know there is nothing that I can prove, the court finds all this quite all right and I have nothing to say. Finally we settled on a divorce by mutual agreement. Every time things appear on the verge of settlement, my husband manages not to come to court—and then everything has to be started all over again. This has already cost me thousands. My husband is deliberately doing this in order to exhaust my funds, hoping that I will then accept attentions from another man, and be found out. In that way he would not have to pay me alimony. The life that I lead is intolerable; for five years this has gone on and there is no sign that it will change. I think that, in the end, it will be better for me to do what my husband is hoping for—men are all immoral and they still have all the laws on their side. Because of this business, I can understand women who get to the point of wanting to kill, through anger and despair. At first I was in need of all my will power not to let myself be carried to such extremity—I confess that I struggled, and I am very happy that I did not do anything destructive.

*Case 235: CM, age 27 (2 children).* My husband is a waiter in a well-known restaurant in town. The facilities of his work have given him an inclination to drink and, what is perhaps even more serious, an in-

clination for gambling. He has gambling tips and systems that always fail. The greater part of his earnings goes into those crazy expenses, and it often happens that he runs into debt. One day he claimed he had lost a thousand, and he came to me asking that amount out of my savings. I flatly refused, since my savings are earmarked for my children. I heard nothing more about it until a few days later when he came home drunk, accompanied by an individual of whom he appeared to be frightened. He was the one to whom my husband owed the money. My husband explained to me that his friend would consider the debt paid if I agreed to spend an hour with him. My husband thought this proposition was completely favorable, and urged me to accept. If it had not been for the children I would have run away right then, but they gave me the courage to look the man straight in his face and tell him what I thought of him. I made so much noise that he finally left. During that time my husband was sick, throwing up his drinks. In spite of all, I took pity on him and he swore to me that he would not do such a thing again, begging me to forgive him. It would be an exaggeration to say that he is entirely changed since then; but life is possible and I do not regret that I was understanding and forgave. That is why I am telling you my story—so that other women may benefit by my experience.

*Case 236:* CM, age 49 (2 children). When I was eighteen I married a man of thirty. I was absolutely

innocent. I realize now that he was ignorant of everything about women—and I fear that he does not know much more at the present time. To me it was only sadness and pain. Frightened and apprehensive, I cried all the time. My husband did nothing to comfort me, all that existed was his desire and many times I had to endure his embraces. This painful trial left me with a distressing feeling, yet I desired and I thought that I loved my husband. For years I was unhappy. My two children have brought me, notwithstanding, great joy and satisfaction. I have tried to make men out of my two sons. I took care of their education myself. I wanted them to understand the woman, her nature, her need for affection and tenderness and love. I think I have succeeded. Both married, they are happy, their wives are understood and they know the most perfect relationships. Sometimes we discuss together the things that have to do with sexology, and they realize my unhappy experience which, in this way at least, will have been of some use.

*Case 237: SI, 25 (no children).* I was engaged at twenty three. Three months later we were lovers. My sexual initiation was progressive. The first time was so intensely desired that I cannot recall what happened. We stayed together for ten months, and separated in full bliss after we had our first doubt and first quarrel. My lover, for whom I was the first woman, made me realize one day that I would not be

the only woman in his life (which he had been led to believe, and so had I). I then felt a sudden tiredness of this whole affair. Although he did not want to leave me then, I broke with him. I had a feeling that our understanding, which had been so perfect, was going to disintegrate, and at no price did I want to see our love die gradually, day by day. However, I have been happy and since then I have lived in chastity, which is easy when one is not in love. I am jealous, I must confess to you (although I force myself to overcome it and not show it), because I find other girls who are prettier than I, or to be more specific, I realize that I am not as attractive as the others, since I do not have a good figure. So, any attention or interest which a man shows for another woman (while he is in my company) makes me suspicious and I really suffer. I believe it may be of some use to let you know that if, instead of being perfectly free and foot-loose as I am, I had been in love and passionately loved, several of my answers to your inquiry would have been different. Love does strange things with truth; it makes you play a mysterious game which does not take in the usual rules. Faithfulness to one man? When I love I feel no desire for other men and, maybe at some future day, I will think just the opposite of what I say here on the matter of freedom for women, whether they be single or married.

*Case 238: CM, age 29 (1 child). When I was six-*

teen I loved a friend of the family, with a very deep love that lasted two years. Very happy years for me. I do not recall that I had any craving for real satisfaction; but life, the family, the education I had, may have falsified my instinct. This pure idyll was broken over a stupid little question of money; it had lasted with kisses, hand pressures, glances—always without a shadow. After this, I met a man, when I was eighteen, and I think that spontaneously came the desire for other things. I then read books on sexual education, after which my parents allowed me an attempt at sexual experience with my friend, who was my senior by several years. I am grateful that my parents permitted me this experience; it is rare that a young girl, when marriage comes to her, can know what pleases and what displeases her—what will be the agreement in the moral, sentimental and sexual matters. If the family and financial questions are set aside, the marriage will often be based on a mutual disregard of character. Too often it will only be the effect of a normal, but purely physical, attraction unhappily embellished with virtues and with all sorts of qualities. After one, two, three or four years, the attraction and desire peters out, it passes, and then the eyes are opened to the real character. We find ourselves strangers (if not enemies) chained in marriage, where we must stay together until death.

*Case 239: SI, age 29 (1 child).* I was, for many years, absolutely frigid. I cried after almost every sex

relation. I loved the man very much—tenderness, intellectual understanding, mutual affection, sensibility, all that was perfect. At that time I thought seriously about the sexual question. I asked—I listened. I also found out—what confusion!—that the majority of women ignore the orgasm and are not at all happy with sexual relations, although they often enjoy caresses. I then altered my life and lived freely alone, looking for and having a few experiences, “a bachelor’s life” as one says about men. Thus I found many things, to start with, the awakening of pleasure, then the charm of new caresses and the revelation of physical satisfaction. I found again all my physical and intellectual balance. No more tears, because there is no reason for imaginary worries. I have at last chosen a companion, with whom I have lived in perfect harmony for four years.

*Case 240: NE.* The woman is always at the man’s mercy. I found myself pregnant at the age of eighteen, when my boy friend was only seventeen. I had spent all my youth in a convent, so you can understand at what stage my sexual education was. I knew nothing, I understood nothing. To crown everything, my friend had to make a request to the government authorities to obtain a ruling, so we could put our situation in order. This start has, fortunately, not harmed my sexual life which is happy, nor my amorous life, for I do not hesitate to say that I still know love in all its fullness. Nevertheless, I realize the

great danger of conjugal failure that I might have suffered, due to my ignorance.

*Case 241:* CM, age 40 (2 children). I just received your questionnaire which I have filled out, and to which I am adding this letter. But I wonder what use it really is going to have. What goal are you aiming at? After the information is gathered, what are the conclusions you will get from it? Why this inquiry? Even anonymously, where will you get? As far as I am concerned I do not mind in the least that you will know my name, even after closely examining this questionnaire. What good is anonymity to you in this business? On the contrary, how can you believe or arrive at conclusions when a person hides, without fear of consequences, behind a veil? Some people will answer who would otherwise not dare face a question put frankly. For me, anything that has to do with the woman, her fate, her struggles, interests me. At all times the woman has been considered as an accessory in the life of a man. An accessory of pleasure and luxury for some—of servitude for others—a drudge for all. The woman, this pampered possession or docile servant or submissive slave, has always bent under the yoke of her lord and master. Then, when she revolted, the laws (those hateful laws of men, made by the men, for the men) soon put an end to it, in irrevocably muzzling the rightful revindication of the woman. What I want, what we all want is simple: It is equality of the sexes!

*Case 242:* RM age 53 (2 children). I got my own sex education, mainly by reading. My mother sometimes gave me certain information. To make sure of what I read, I didn't let her see I was so well informed when she spoke to me about it. I would give her the impression that she was the one who had kept me informed, but by listening to her I added to my certainty. When I met the man who was to be my husband, both families opposed our union. We then managed to make it necessary for reason of a situation. I had been pregnant four months when we were married in church. If it had to be done over again, we would do without it; we had to agree to this to avoid arguments between the families. The quarrels came, however, when my husband drew up a will in which he made evident the fact that he wanted to be buried civilly. After his death, a lot of fuss was made, to which I finally put an end by throwing everyone out. My life had never been so peaceful as it is now.

*Case 243:* CM, age 30 (3 children). I had an abortion once, after the birth of my second child. I had had the first two children with only a one-year interval between pregnancies. While nursing my second child I found I was pregnant a third time. The oldest child was not very strong; he was nervous and didn't eat well. I was thus expecting a third child less than a year after the second had been born. Since I am convinced that a child must be raised solely by its



mother, I was afraid to assume more work than I could possibly manage—so, with my husband's consent, I had an abortion performed at two months. Another point was raised in leading me to that action; my pregnancies had made me heavier and shapeless, and I wanted to get my appearance back into order before I had a third child. I have never regretted anything. Later I wanted, and had, a third child, who is doing well. I do not at all consider the contraceptive methods unethical. On the contrary, to punish abortion and sterilization (although I do not approve of the latter) seems to be an action that attempts to rob a person of his liberty. I would think that one could find in the desire to control births one of our superiorities over the animal—bearing children seems to me a deed of such great importance, so heavy with consequences, that it should be accepted by two beings only when they have considered it and are convinced that their child will be healthy and happy. Anybody can be mistaken.

*Case 244:* RM, age 33 (1 child). I have no false shame. I have the courage of my opinions. If M. Marc Lanval wishes to ask any further questions, I will answer them with pleasure and sincerity. I thus sign this document, absolutely confident and convinced that no wrong or inconsiderate use will be made of it. I do not know what my husband would think of my answers to this questionnaire. Being in doubt, I will not tell him about it.

*Case 245:* RM, age 54 (1 child). I have followed with much interest the different lectures you gave at the Society for Psychoanalysis. I expect to go to hear you again, Saturday evening, at the Circle for Social Studies, on the subject "The Woman and the Laws." I will then know exactly what are the rights you demand for the woman. I find that your campaign "for a greater human happiness" is very beautiful and human, and I congratulate you. Although I have not much to expect of life, I wish with all my power for the happiness of all humanity. It would take too long to tell, on paper, about a whole life, but I will, anyway, tell you that I have much personal experience in the matter of large families, of sickness, prejudices—in short, of all the miseries that come from it. But I hope I pleased you in having filled out the questionnaire sincerely. With all my admiration, I present you my most sincere salutations. . . .

*Case 246:* RM, age 26 (no children). My different answers have made obvious, I believe, that I do my best to live independently. So, the day my husband and I decided to marry, we gave ourselves time for reflection and experiences. Among the latter, the physical experience had its place, but we wanted it absolutely stripped of preliminary excitations. That is why we made an appointment for nine o'clock one morning. My husband had a home of his own, and that is where I went. I was then twenty one years old—he was thirty two. I will confess to you that I

was nervous on my arrival, and that it took a good deal of self-control for me to keep that appointment. It may seem strange to you, but we have within ourselves such an attachment to tradition that it is often more difficult than one would think to banish all prejudices, especially as I was a virgin. The man (who later became my husband) ignored all this, for he had not asked and I had not told him. Neither of us thought this was of any importance. Then coldly, methodically, I disrobed and said, "Here we go for the experience." I retain a marvelous memory of that moment, for it was with a man of admirable tact and refinement. Later he confided to me that for him, too, it was an indelible memory, for it was the first time that he held in his arms a true and sincere woman—and he was thirty two. I underline this. His previous mistresses had all been passing fancies, more or less mercenary women. So far as my experience was concerned, I was well informed on theory regarding the matters of hygiene, birth control, and so on; but of the actual physical points of view I knew absolutely nothing.

*Case 247: RM, age 47.* It is a pleasure for me to give you my impression and the details of my woman's life from the ages of sixteen to forty seven. Very often I wondered, asking myself if I was the same as all other women, for, due to my profession I am taken into their confidences constantly, and out of ten women only about two can follow me in the field of

ideas. From the ages of sixteen to nineteen I was like most of the young girls; I hoped to get married, although I had no idea of what marriage was in reality. At twenty, I entered a special maternity school to study to become a midwife, and there I saw to my full satisfaction all that I had been ignorant of, so far as marriage was concerned. I was rather bashful and retiring, but after one month there I became completely changed. I retained the same ideas I had before, but I became more circumspect. So, two years later, when I had completed my education, my attitude was one of skepticism, my manner mocking and coquettish, and I was gifted with an iron will. Once in possession of my diploma, I decided to travel, and went abroad. There I had affairs, but I always got out of them to my advantage—those who courted me had lost their time and money. Despite my unusual manner of acting and thinking, I never met with anything but warm friendliness. Even now, my companionship is sought after. I must confide in you that nature has favored me; I am tall, well shaped, good looking. My greatest satisfaction was to let myself go—be fancy-free, and the more difficulties I met the happier I became. I got married, to follow so-called good advice of friends, but after ten years of marriage I still haven't really changed. My disposition is the same, as well as my desire for absolute freedom. I am not a housewife and my husband, in spite of his great kindness, has always been left in the background. If a couple could have a platonic love, that

would be my ideal. I dare tell you that if I had to make my life again, I would still do the same things, but I would never get married—preferring to continue my life of complete freedom. It is a beautiful dream and I am often nostalgic about it. I hope that my confession will be able to give you a few ideas, and please believe me, M. Marc Lanval, yours truly . . . with all wishes for the best of luck and success.

*Case 248:* CM, age 29 (1 child). I was the sixth child of ignorant parents, practically illiterate; my father was an alcoholic and my whole childhood was sickly and miserable. I was brutally deflorated when I was sixteen and a half, was married at eighteen—a marriage that was inflicted on me, and that destroyed my last illusion. The results were pitiful. I was sentimental, sweet and resigned. A period of disgust led me to revolt and I proceeded to seek enlightenment by reading serious books. I recovered my good health, thanks to an active outdoor life—and with the recovery of my health I gained a greater moral strength. At twenty seven I did my best to resume the struggle for better mental balance after a long period of convalescence. I had phases of erotic dreams and would awaken just before the orgasm, which left me more fitful than ever. After twelve years of marital relations, I had a most unexpected pregnancy. Several physicians whom I had consulted five years previously, had said I could not conceive. Their decision was unexplained, but the pregnancy

was a fact. It was as bad as possible; the first month great mental fatigue and a general physical weakening. When my time came, there was no labor, but, without pain, a brutal hemorrhage occurred. I was taken to the hospital where, after an hour and a half, all was over; but in between that time a Caesarian operation had been performed. I was given a blood transfusion, and my baby was alive, normal and weighed 6 lb. 11 oz. I was able to nurse him for several months. At this time the baby is doing well, and I hope soon to completely recover my strength.

*Case 249:* RM, age 45 (no children). Through a friend (one who believes in free thought) I received your questionnaire, which greatly interested me. During the same week by coincidence (explained, perhaps, by the fact that now your name quickly impresses me whenever I read it) a copy of the publication, "Light and Liberty," of which you are director, fell into my hands. I then read with eagerness a dozen of the issues, particularly articles of such quality as yours. I beg you to accept all my admiration, not only for your courage, your philanthropy, your talent, but especially because you are, in truth, the only one who stands for a "greater Human Happiness." Your words have awakened in me the hope that the campaign you are leading with such activity will bear fine results in the near future. Allow me to ask you how in our country one could find an organization where women can obtain information about sexual

problems, as they can in America, England and Holland? How are the instructions of methods obtainable, of which you speak in one of your articles? I have been led to think of these questions only recently, but I am a person of enthusiasm and action, when there is reason for it.

*Case 250:* RM, age 68 (5 children). My poor mother was sweet and good. She bore fourteen children, of whom only six survived. We were all frightened of my father, who was selfish and brutal; he used to beat my mother often. I was raised in complete ignorance of life and of sexual matters. I met young men, friends of my brothers; one of them made love to me and introduced me to his father, a widower, who also took a fancy to me. This strange situation was resolved by the son who, taking advantage of my state of intoxication at a country dance, devirginized me on the bench of a roadside inn. I was then twenty five years old and he was hardly twenty! I became pregnant from this one stupid relation and from then on I lived in the most acute anguish. Of course the time came when I had to confide in my mother. She urged me not to marry the young man who had caused my pregnancy, despite the probability of disgrace, because she feared that I would not be happy with him. I ignored her advice, however, and married him in church when I was in the fifth month of pregnancy, in spite of the difficulties raised by my father-in-law, who had been

in love with me too, and so was provoked. My mother's intuition had not deceived her, for although my young husband was good-natured, our life together was not happy. I bore five children, but only three survived. All my deliveries were very difficult, with anesthesia and forceps, and so on. We knew no precaution other than withdrawal, and our relations were separated by long intervals, because of fear of pregnancy. My husband made up for this elsewhere, and that was the cause of various tragedies, including an illegitimate child. I never knew love fully and I submitted to the act only with reluctance and disgust. My husband, who drank quite a lot, impregnated me with my last child during one of his spells of drunkenness, while I was asleep. The result was an abnormal child, a creature incapable of coordination and directing himself in life unassisted, who has caused me up to this time many financial difficulties. In spite of the fact that I deplore the ignorance in which I was raised, I never had the slightest courage to inform my daughters—this due to a terrible feeling of embarrassment. But I consider modern sexual education far preferable to the life of servitude to which I was exposed because of the silence of my own mother. I am happy that my daughters raise their children in accordance with this modern system, as I am grateful to my sons-in-law for having given their wives a better life than mine was.

*Case 251:* SD, age 28 (no children). Do not be



surprised at this masculine handwriting for, to make the task easier, I asked my boy friend to draw up the answers and especially to explain clearly to me your different questions, as I did not understand them all. Considering their great privacy, I then answered all the questions of the third part (the intimate life) by myself. You may be assured that all the answers were dictated by me. My boy friend had a different opinion on quite a few of the questions; but he only told me of them when he had finished filling out the questionnaire.

*Case 252:* CM, age 66 (no children). My husband is fifteen years younger than I, but he is powerless to accomplish the sexual act, which may be due to his having lived a long time in the colonies. His disposition is strange—when he sees a woman who pleases him it seems as if he were ready to seduce her immediately, and often he pursues her for quite a long time. He has a mistress, whom I know, and she confided in me that he is impotent with her also. Nevertheless, he goes to see her almost every day—why, I do not know. Is he worn out or sick? He told me that he has enjoyed life to its utmost. He is fifty one years old, I am sixty six, but I do not look much older than he. His skin is very wrinkled, but he was, and still is, good-looking—and he knows it! At times I think he is a little mad. He does not seem to have all his reason and asks me the same question repeatedly, showing that his memory is failing. He does not know how to

make friends, his self-willed disposition (he always wants to be right!) is apparent when you get to know him. He is obstinate, conceited, and most pleased with himself. His family does not love him and he has always made his own people suffer by his ill nature. There isn't enough time to tell you more. Do not fail to include me in the statistics of those who are not happy. If I had it to do over again, I would think twice.

*Case 253:* RM, age 29 (no children). May I congratulate you for the intelligent frankness with which your questionnaire is drawn up? It takes in many facts that have too long been ignored, voluntarily or through a false sense of shame. I hope with all my heart that your inquiry will succeed and will win over those ridiculous, middle-aged prejudices that still complicate our modern life. Thank you in the name of all intelligent women. (signed) X..., High School Instructor.

*Case 254:* RM, age 73. Knowing life and the practice of medicine, I give my unequivocal answer to the enclosed questionnaire: "Any social science which defies religious ethics and the commandments of God, is an edifice built on sand." (signed) A grandmother of eighteen grandchildren.

*Case 255:* RM, age 37. (3 children). Your questionnaire is good, but before any reform can be in-

troduced, the people must be reeducated. I live among women who work and are of the very low income group; their ignorance and the narrowness of their viewpoints is distressing. Sexual education, social emancipation, and so on, would be the perfect things if people wanted to understand. I admire and wish good luck to those who, like yourself, try something. As for me, I would have no courage before the crowd of prejudices and stupidities that have to be overcome. Will the new education in some of the other countries bring better results? I doubt it. But how backward the women of my own country are! It is inconceivable! It is sad to say, but I believe that they are dangerously asleep—look out for the awakening!

*Case 256:* SI, age 45 (no children). Being a musical artist, I never got married and did not desire children. This does not prevent me from observing marriage around me, and its social consequences. As I believe this is really the main object of your inquiry, I wish to give my opinion on that matter, as follows: The attitude of the man still remains that of master. There is still too much survival of the conception of ancient marriage. There would be more chance to have good homes if the masculine prejudice for feminine virginity disappeared before the marriage, thus avoiding the couple's entry into marriage like blind people in an unknown field. Inexperience, on the part of both, is very often the source of lack

of knowledge and indecision which, in turn, bring about misunderstandings and deceptions—then, ultimately, a progressive estrangement which manifests itself in constant quarrels. In regard to the question of the “companionable relationship that is free,” the partners should be the ones to determine the basis of the relationship. As far as I am concerned, I think the windows should be wide open on the old matrimonial edifice; give it more air, broaden its horizon to give more chance of happiness. Young people should know each other better and longer before contracting an engagement. We are in a difficult period for marriages. Finances are unstable, people mutually look for a prey (financial). The dispositions of people are nervous and irritable, nobody forgives anything, we treat one another as enemies; in short, the harmonious element is missing. There is a latent revolt in the air. We live stupidly, clinging to an exterior luxury and, by this fact, envy, jealousy and hatred are the rulers of our state of mind. The nerves play a great part in marriage, yet most people are tense and nervously strained—couples lack a calm, inner life. Divorces are plentiful today, it is true, but is this a proof that conjugal happiness was more real in the bygone times when husband and wife were harnessed together until death, and could only submit to their fates (especially the women)? I well know that divorces, from year to year, are increasing, but this proves nothing, for before this new thing—the divorce—was accepted

into the way of life with the slowness of evolution, it was necessary for men and women to adapt themselves to the idea of resignation in unhappy marriages. We are now at the point where the people are becoming accustomed to, and learning the utilization of, an institution that liberates them. They do not try anymore to adapt themselves at any price. No longer is a mode of living (fixed by a regulatory code) desired, and the idea of eternal duration of marriage has been abolished. One enters into it and goes out of it, begins again and, if it still doesn't work, gets out of it once more and again starts all over. I do not know if that can be called the "failure of conjugal happiness." People have retained some prejudices (regarding man and woman) which continually provoke violent collisions of temperament. But, as against the ancient concept that one had to remain yoked, and by which one was forced to acquire a technique and tactics for people who must stay together for life; now the desire is to break those chains and, thus, one uses the new possibilities. There is another factor: Woman has freed herself from certain unbearable chains of marriage, now she can go out to work or pursue a career and does not have to fear as much for her financial needs. This has enabled her to acquire some dignity in protesting certain masculine tyrannies.

*Case 257:* RM, age 42 (9 children). My young sister (single) who sometimes comes to help me in

my housework, gave your questionnaire to me. When a woman has nine children, sir, of which the eldest is not sixteen years old and the youngest hardly a few months, time is lacking to become engrossed in anything other than housekeeping and the family. Although I was willing, I have never had a chance to learn what I should have known from the start, before being able to answer you. My husband, who is a country doctor, says that there is nothing to do to avoid my being continually pregnant. So I have placed all my hope in an early menopause.

*Case 258: RM, age 40 (2 children).* Neither in the convent where I was raised, nor in my family, did I hear anything said that could cast a light on the answers to your questions. At eighteen I was so completely naive and uninformed that even my teachers were amazed. They asked me strange questions at times, but I didn't understand—yet intuitively I felt that I did not have to demand any explanations. I went along philosophically, with the idea that the day I would have to know, I would be told, and that I would live happily and peacefully. At about this time, the war exploded and we had to get away. One of my laic teachers could not allow herself to let me face life and the departure abroad in such a dangerous state of innocence. She took it upon herself to give me a quick and succinct theoretical sexual education. I received this brutal revelation with amazement, but with a curious psychic shock that

gave me a rather secret satisfaction in that everyone was like this, that it was all right, and that I could be sure that nothing would be changed when the time would come that I might use it for my own account. The idea that I might not marry had obviously never skimmed the surface of my mind. When marriage came to me, I recalled that episode—and my children profited by it. Since their earliest childhood I watched the evolution of their minds, helped in this by a clear-sighted husband, who is understanding and has broader views, since he is much more educated than I. He taught me, therefore, to consider the child not as an “offspring,” some kind of little animal from whom the mother is released when she has washed him, nourished and dressed him, but rather like a marvelous little world that opens onto life some new and wondering eyes. Since the age of four, my children have asked me their questions on the sexual mysteries and I have always answered them immediately and honestly, with the result that my daughter of twelve knows more than I did the day I was married. My children are proud of their knowledge and are infinitely grateful to me. Since they know where they come from, they have shown me a really touching tenderness, an understanding of little woman and of little man. My daughter told me one day, “Mother darling, I am so proud and happy to be your fruit. You are obliged now to love me always, as you are my tree.” Isn’t this charming? That way I have all the trust of my children and I

am thus capable of guiding them and keeping them acquainted with the real life through their little world initiated from ours. I am certain that this sexual education must give far better results than the system of making things mysterious and telling tales that induce the children to ask their companions for information, causing them, most times, to be wrongly informed.

*Case 259:* SI, age 34 (1 child). I do not know if I filled your questionnaire in the right way. I am not informed enough to understand certain questions. But I must tell you that I am a poor wretch. I am an unwed mother, I have a little boy four years old. I live with my crippled father and mother; we have a very small allowance each month. Keep in mind that I must wear myself out to raise my little one. So, this is to tell you that I would very much like to know a method so that it will not happen to me again, and it would make me very happy. I have seen in the newspapers that for a low price I could get the complete method of Ogino-Knauss. It is not expensive and would certainly be worth it to me. I have never heard anything about it and did not know that such a thing was in existence; but I can understand it is through my ignorance, because the wives of the well-to-do people of my village do not have many children.

*Case 260:* SI. I am as old as the world. I am in



love with life and not with human individuals. Thus, as the sexual question is a thing which does not exist, I sign: A single woman.

*Case 261:* SD, age 28. My mother was killed in an automobile accident before I was five. My father, crazed with grief, went abroad to the colonies, after having put me in a school at X. . . . When he came back, after an absence of twelve years, I was a young lady who, I was told, was the living image of my mother. The years had not erased the memory of the dead wife with whom I was identified. At the request of my father, I formed the habit of calling him by his first name. He spoiled me and pampered me like a fiance. When I reached the age of twenty one, he offered me a beautiful trip. It was during that trip that I definitely took my mother's place. Because of fear of gossip (for people are more wicked than understanding) we changed our place of residence and for the past seven years we live here as husband and wife, without anybody having discovered our secret. Since the famous day, my father has never again spoken of my mother, and by a tacit agreement she is never mentioned between us. I am completely happy and have never regretted for a second what I have done. I do not seem to be able to imagine that I am committing a wrong or some sort of an offense. On the contrary, I have made happy a man whom I love, and I wonder if ever a husband could have made me happier. Not wishing our union

to be fruitful, he has had himself sterilized. It is six years since this operation was performed, and we have noticed nothing troublesome or abnormal. My father—little husband—seems much younger than he is, and nobody believes or would believe that there are twenty five years difference in our ages.

The authenticity of these letters cannot be doubted. If there are among our correspondents any who recognize themselves, or seem to recognize themselves in these cases, they can be absolutely reassured. All the documents, letters and enclosures are destroyed, even the forms and envelopes which say "Return—refused." They were burned, the fire consumed everything and the ashes were scattered.

The statement of the sheriff's officer, a copy of which follows, establishes the most formal and irrefutable proof.

#### STUDY OF SHERIFF'S OFFICER, ANDRÉ PROVOST

Telephone 15-21-71

C, Postal check 3120

35 Avenue de la Reine

SHAERBEEK—BRUSSELS

#### OFFICIAL REPORT OF STATEMENT

The year one thousand nine hundred and thirty seven, the 5th of May:—

1. The undersigned, *André Provost*, sheriff's officer close to the Tribunal of first instance, located in

Brussels, and of the Justice of the Peace of the 2nd canton of Shaerbeek, residing at Avenue de la Reine 35; required at the demand of:

*Marc Lanval*, writer, residing at Forest Brussels, Street of the Allies 25/27,.....

have gone personally this day, at 10:15 o'clock to the residence of the petitioner (Street of the Allies 25/27, at Forest—Brussels), for the purpose of checking on the amount of 610 inquiry forms regarding *Woman's Life*, a sociological study led professionally by the petitioner.

The latter gave to me the aforementioned inquiry forms in four divisions; each of the four packs sealed by means of a string tied cross-wise, the fastening of the ends was secured (thus could not be broken open) by seals in gold wax, bearing the dry seal of my petitioner with the initials "P. S."

I then proceeded to count the inquiry forms and arrived at the total of exactly *six hundred and ten*, in this manner:

In the 1st division, numbered from 1 to 150.

In the 2nd division, numbered from 151 to 300.

In the 3rd division, numbered from 301 to 450.

In the 4th division, numbered from 451 to 610.

It was possible for me to proceed with this counting, without breaking the seals in question and with-

out being permitted to take note of the written contents of the inquiry forms aforementioned.

We then proceeded with the burning of the four packs of the inquiry forms, in the furnace of the central heater located in the building where I drew up deeds. This operation was started at 10:45 o'clock and I confirmed that the burning was completed at 11:10.

My mission being completed, I drew up minutes of the proceedings of the aforementioned, to serve as a document of worth to my petitioner.

Of which act, cost: One hundred twenty two francs, fifty centimes.

Registered in Brussels—A. H.

The

May 11, 1937

V..... F..... C.....

Received fifteen francs

The Collector

**Part VI**  
**CONCLUSIONS**



# Conclusions

## THE WOMAN OF TODAY

From the examination of the responses to our questions—the average of the agreements and the differences—there rises into view a distinct feminine type who represents the average opinion and attitude of the women of our time, regarding the great problems which we had the opportunity to study during this inquiry. We will refer to this type as *the standard woman*.

A description of *the standard woman* who appears as a result of our inquiry, is:

Between the ages of thirty three and thirty four

Married religiously (58.2%)

Mother of one child (1.06)

But would like to have two children (1.94)

A working woman (71.7%)

She wants to enjoy complete equality of civil rights (90.6%) and wants to vote on all issues (75.9%) because she feels in doing so she can bring about better educational programs.

The sexual problem as it exists meets with her disfavor. She wants it changed (98.5%). Births must

be controlled (95.4%); it should not be necessary for woman to submit to her maximum capacity to produce children (96.1%). As regards the fact that her happiness consists in having many children, *the standard woman* definitely answers "no" (92.6%).

The laws against birth control, she says, must be abolished (91.8%). Although she has knowledge of some form of contraceptive method (73.7%), she wants freedom in this matter. This requirement is corroborated in the desires that she expresses regarding the ban on abortion, which must be removed (94.2%) for economic, as much as medical, reasons but the economic reasons outweigh the others in importance.

*The standard woman* is filled with sympathy and charity—the two most beautiful qualities of womanhood—for the sexually disabled and abnormal. When one questions her about exhibitionists, she answers, "Why punish?" (22.7%) when it is so simple and so human to give care and to cure (67.4%). She understands what all this means, for she has had the opportunity to meet such misled men (58.8%), when she was at the average age of fourteen to fifteen.

Even the homosexuals have met with her understanding. While the laws of some countries condemn and sentence with severe penalties those who are affected abnormally—while public opinion, through ignorance or cruelty, often pursues the homosexuals with its sarcasm and its hatred—our *standard woman* does not want them to be punished (68.8%). She



easily finds an excuse for feminine homosexuality, but deplotes masculine homosexuality and believes it is harmful not only for her own sex (undoubtedly by depriving it of a possible partner), but also for the men who are concerned, feeling their relationship has no aesthetic basis.

She finds prostitution unacceptable, although she hesitated a long time before giving this answer (54.7 %).

*The standard woman* regrets that an organization disseminating information regarding birth control (scientific limitations of births) does not exist in her country. She strongly claims that such an organization would be useful, necessary, charitable and desirable!

Although some strong-minded individuals might think that smoking for a woman is a proof of her emancipation, *the standard woman* (whose good judgment nobody will doubt) is not of that opinion. She says, "No, I will not smoke at home for my own pleasure (54 %), and much less in society (66 %)." Femininity has nothing to gain by the practice of smoking.

On the subject of sports, we regret that *the standard woman* does not know how to swim (56 %) and, in addition, that physical culture is equally unknown to her (63.3 %). Besides this neglect of sports, there is the question of her beverages; it is unfortunate that coffee is her favorite drink (35.5 %), whereas water, which should be her first consideration,

rates much less (31.8%) and milk, that most important liquid, comes far below (5.3%).

As far as occupations and professions are concerned, *the standard woman* does not want to be a policewoman (54%), she prefers to be a judge (71.8%). She has no hesitancy about becoming a cabinet minister (65.6%), but she does not want to join the clergy (70.5%), nor will she be a soldier (80.5%), for *the standard woman* wants peace.

Regarding her part in marriage and family matters, the first thing she considers is the choice of a partner. Shall he be inexperienced (15%), or shall he have practiced sexual liberty? Evidently, the latter (85%). Once she is married, the issue changes: freedom is a nice thing which the man may use with moderation (48.6%), but faithfulness seems preferable (51.4%).

No more than her mother or her grandmother, does *the standard woman* have illusions about the positive and continuous monogamy (37.8%), but frank acknowledgment is preferable (62.2%). Is this physical unfaithfulness of the man, if the woman isn't made to suffer by it financially or in physical satisfactions, really so condemnable? *The standard woman* answers, "It is bearable" (64%), and "It is condemnable" (28.1%).

She was asked about recourse to divorce in cases where living together is really impossible. She responded that if there are no children and the agreement is mutual, it should be only a formality at low

cost (91 % ); if children are born of the marriage, the aspect of the problem is different only from the financial point of view for, spiritually, the children have nothing to gain from living in a discordant home. Thus, actually, after all factors are taken into consideration, the divorce is preferable; it should be less expensive than it now is (64 % ).

Frequently it has been written that the power of religions rests with the woman. But it is obvious that this influence is lessening. Even if she admits the existence of a religious attitude, she is very close to claiming that organized religion is a superfluous institution (56.5 % ).

In addition to losing many illusions in marriage, the woman also loses her name—the one she bore since her birth. She revolts against this state of affairs, for she considers that marriage is an association and not an absorption. *The standard woman* wants to retain her maiden name (70.3 % ); she wants her own children registered under her own name (68.9 % ).

To establish a home is not a minor matter. Before setting forth on such a venture, it is best to think it over. The age of the husband and wife plays its part in this matter; *the standard woman* says it should be about twenty five for the woman, and close to thirty for the man. This difference of five years between them seems to be a fact that was seriously considered (34.5 % ).

*The standard woman* does not seem satisfied with her fate, nor with the masculine prerogatives, which

seem to incite her to prefer being a man (53%). But we feel safe in saying that not much would be needed in the way of satisfaction and realization of feminine desires for her to become once more proud and happy to be a woman. Nevertheless, *the standard woman* does not say that man is devoid of faults. On the contrary, she has drawn an impressive table of the "essential" qualities that man should endeavor to acquire. We refer the reader to it in Question 28.

*The standard woman* is engrossed in her children; she desires for them a sound sexual education of which the father (70.7%) will take charge, with the help of the mother (62.9%), and perhaps this will be followed through more completely with the help of a physician (41.4%), but more especially by a sexologist (60.6%) who understands better the young person's psychology. In this way the ignorance of the young girl and boy will be abolished. *The standard woman* rejects the idea of marriage where the bride would come intact—but ignorant. The type of education, of which she herself was a victim, must be condemned and she considers that the young girl can have pre-marital sexual experiences (82.6%). Furthermore, virginity has no real importance (82.4%); it would be quite simple to rid the infant girl of it by an operation at birth (63.3%).

*The standard woman* has given her opinion on the physical faithfulness of her partner; but what did she decide in regard to her own behavior? Before marriage, the question seems of no importance (35.8%)

## CONCLUSIONS

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and faithfulness superfluous (21.2 %). The idea of chastity before marriage seems to have passed out of date and it is demanded by only a few (6.9 %).

After marriage, faithfulness may be desirable (37.3 %), unless the question be without importance (30.6 %). Absolute faithfulness, which just a few years ago was demanded almost to its full 100 %, is now required by only a small proportion (27 %). This cause has lost almost three-fourths of its weight.

Thus, it was essential to know if *the standard woman* was going to forget, in marriage, that she is a sweetheart as well as a mother. The answer was astounding: woman (sweetheart) first (73.9 %), for a woman can always be a mother, too.

The institution of marriage, as it was understood not so long ago, has disintegrated (77 %). It must be conceived in a spirit of freedom, as a comradeship, where the respect of one another's individual personality is made secure (36.7 %). There are many other reasons to add improvements to the old institution; but we cannot go into that idea any further at this time, other than to call attention to the intimate causes for conjugal failures and divorces which are set forth throughout the cases in this book.

To claim to require for oneself sexual liberty is evidently giving proof of a progressive spirit; but the main object is to discover if the idea is ready to take its place in our way of life. *The standard woman*, who is logical in reasoning for herself, will not hesitate to grant to her daughter (in whom she relives her own

youth) the sexual freedom (75.4%) of which she was deprived. Sexology (a topic which has been taboo until most recently) has won a place in family discussions (81.7%), and the mental and physical partition erected between parents and their children is very close to becoming no more than a memory.

*The standard woman* voices no objection to her children seeing their parents (while dressing or in the bath) completely nude (60.3%); yet she is not a nudist (88%) and she is not overwhelmingly in favor of others being nudists (48.9%).

\* \* \*

To help in her enlightenment of science, *the standard woman* did not hesitate to confide in us the innermost secret details of her private life.

It was thus that she let us know, in an accurate manner, that her first menstruation occurred between the ages of thirteen and fourteen. As in the cases of the majority (60.4%), this function did not cause her too much trouble.

At a time when pregnancy is much discussed, *the standard woman* does not know (64.8%) about the marvelous (so-called) birth control system of Ogino-Knauss. It was necessary for us to explain this to her; but it did not convince her (88.8%) of the value of the method.

She escapes by a close margin from the suffering of leukorrhea (50.9%). Her delivery was made at home (67.7%), but we are led to believe that the

next child will be delivered at the hospital (73%).

Her sexual initiation was about half-way good (50.5%) because she was not completely ignorant in the matter (61.5%). Because of this, her sexual life is just average happy (57.9%). She experiences full satisfaction, that is to say orgasm, only occasionally, and sometimes with scarcity.

Would *the standard woman* admit to being jealous? Despite the admirable efforts she has made, in view of her emancipation, there still remains traces of this trait (51.6%) about which, it must be said, the first responsibility rests on man; it requires but small effort on her part to overcome jealousy. The factor, which will stimulate her toward conquering it, is that she pretends that her partner is not jealous (57%).

What does *the standard woman* think of sexual sterilization of the man? She does not seem to take much interest in that problem. She says, however, that she would not desire it in her marriage (58.8%); but after her husband reaches the age of forty (an age when he does not desire to procreate any more) sterilization might be considered (53.5%). Outside of marriage, a sterilized partner would not be displeasing (55.5%).

For various reasons, however, *the standard woman* prefers to use contraceptive methods (86.4%). In spite of her knowledge, or what she believes to be knowledge of accepted methods, she is beset during the sexual act by the fear of an undesired pregnancy

(56.6 % ), and how grateful she would be (59.9% ) to the one who would be able to relieve her of this anguish.

We can thus draw a conclusion from all that precedes and summarize the immediate demands of the average woman, who is an adult, with modern viewpoints, married to the average man, mother of a family, as follows:

**THE EIGHT IMMEDIATE DEMANDS  
OF THE STANDARD WOMAN**

1. Equality of civil and electoral rights.
2. Abolition, or at least amendment, of the stringent birth control laws.
3. Amendment of the laws on abortion.
4. Appointment of women to highest judiciary positions.
5. Amendment of matrimonial rules on the basis of equality of the sexes and respect of individual personality.
6. Broadening of divorce laws.
7. Retention of woman's maiden name after marriage.
8. Registration of children under the name of the mother.



### TO TAKE LEAVE

. . . And here we are, at the end of our effort. We have released, with all the objectivity that was in our power and the concern of scrupulous accuracy, the lessons and the conclusions that arose from this feminine consultation. Without thought of doing it "on purpose" we have, in reality, asked the modern woman to make known to us her opinion on the action which, for many years, through writing and speech, we are leading in order to attain for woman her rightful place—the place that we consider should be returned to her by right in a democratic society, and to help her climb the steep ascent of her social emancipation.

The advantages, the knowledge that we will draw out of this for ourselves, and which are of the greatest value to us, offer an invitation to our readers to meditate on the different problems upon which we have touched, and permit themselves to enter into the noble game of introspection. Any woman may find herself in these pages, and many a man will discover, here and there, a trait of his own character. To them this psychic mirror (which scientific truth makes so clear and simple) will provide a way to discover and cure imperfections, habits and defects which they may have ignored and through which,

unconsciously, they have caused their partners to suffer.

To those who govern us, who hold in their hands the fate of our populations, who legislate in the thought of remedying social ills, we have brought an instrument of unique documentary value. This is not an imaginary volume—but all through it linger the cries of anguish, the pleas for hope, of a great number of our women from whom are expected the generation of tomorrow.

In our mind, this inquiry cannot remain at the academic or bookish stage; it must have an immediate scientific study, it must produce a loud awakening, it must be spread in such diverse ways that favorable repercussions on the accepted way of life and on the vital laws will be its logical result.

We believe that our work will not have been in vain, for it will allow men and women, for whom social progress is not a word without meaning, to make themselves useful, better and more understanding toward one another.

We earnestly hope that these pages, read and discussed between couples, be for them "food for thought," a spiritual nourishment—and that they may bring more light to their relations, more frankness and confidence in calling forth friendly discussions. During these, each one can state his individual views, quoting the experiences told in one or another of these cases, to help him by drawing forth such lessons as are contained therein.

## CONCLUSIONS

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We dare hope that we have helped to create the prelude of new times, where the respect of others and the understanding of human frailties will lead the enlightened couple toward a "greater human happiness."

MARC LANVAL







UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA



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